WEST VIRGINIA VACATION GUIDE

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THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST IN ALMOST HEAVEN, WEST VIRGINIA. YOUR JOURNEY TO ONE OF THE NATION'S BEST VACATION DESTINATIONS STARTS HERE.

This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of John Denver's famous ode to our great state, "Country Roads." For those who know this anthem, I can assure you it captures the essence of what West Virginia has to offer—stunning mountain views, winding country roads and a place that feels like home the moment you arrive.

When you hit the road, please remember to travel responsibly. Check the latest statewide guidelines, as well as the status of individual businesses before you go. Above all else, your health and safety is our top priority.

We look forward to welcoming you to West Virginia soon!

Sincerely,

Jim Justice
Governor

---

on the cover

HIGHLAND SCENIC HIGHWAY
Wind through 43 miles of the Monongahela National Forest.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Ben Amend

Almost Heaven is closer than you think.

No matter what time of year you visit, West Virginia is a nature-lover's paradise full of wonder and excitement. Journey along the state's famous country roads to see its legendary Appalachian scenery for yourself. The nation's third-most-forested state features nine distinct regions, each buzzing with history and culture. And its storied cities and towns are ready to welcome visitors to their top-notch resorts, independent boutiques, restaurants and wineries. Drive, ride or fly into our state, and we'll show you a mountain escape filled with world-class adventure for every traveler.

Ride the Rails

Amtrak's *Capitol Limited* runs daily between Washington, D.C., and Chicago, with stops in Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg. Amtrak's *Cardinal* runs three days a week between New York and Chicago, with stops in White Sulphur Springs, Alderson, Hinton, Prince, Thurmond, Montgomery, Charleston and Huntington. Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) service operates weekdays between Martinsburg and Washington, D.C.

Come Fly with Us

Seven airports offer commercial airline service:

CRW, Charleston
CKB, Clarksburg
HTS, Huntington
MGW, Morgantown
BKW, Beckley
LWB, Lewisburg
PKB, Parkersburg

Roads to Almost Heaven

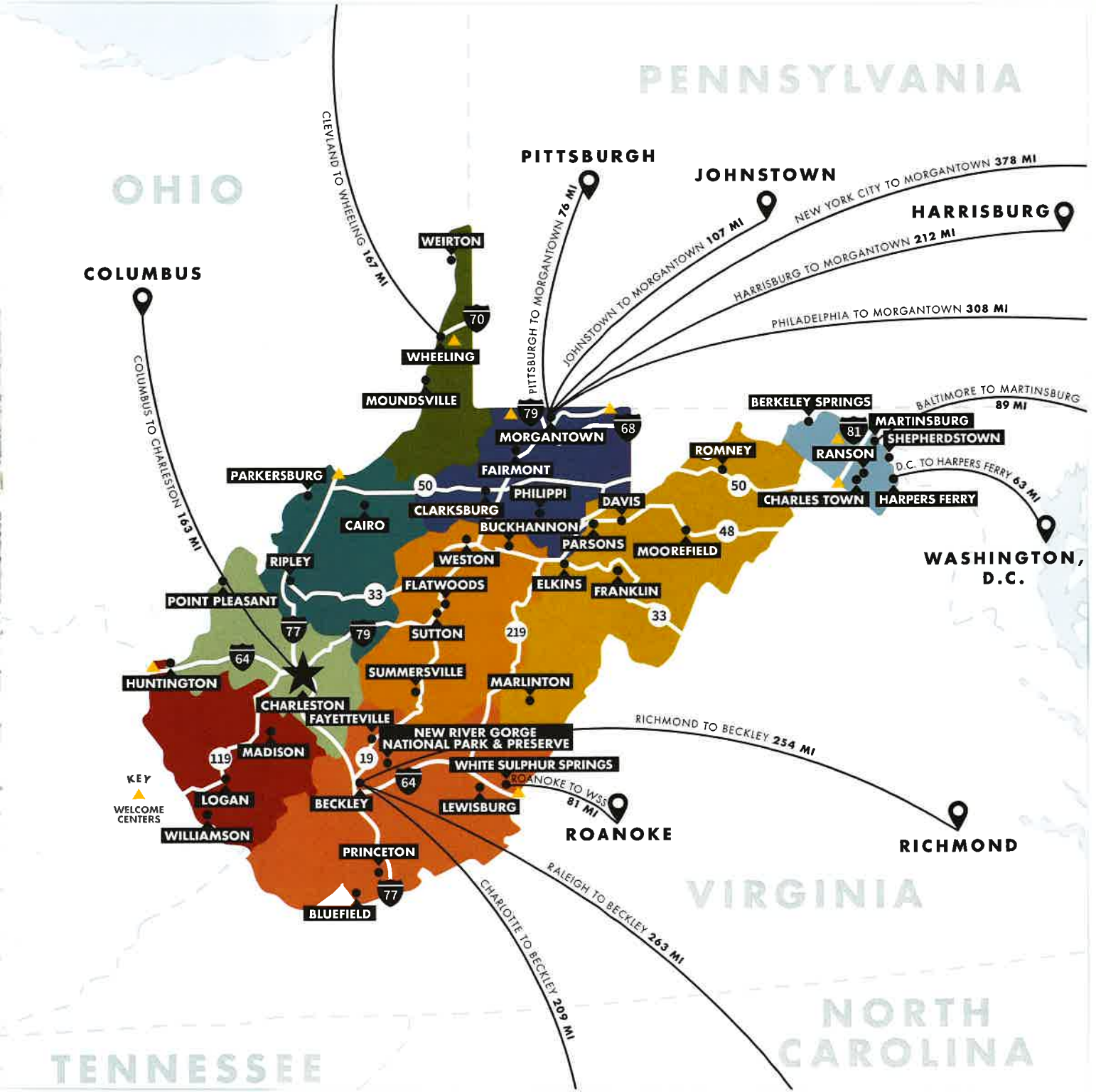
The state is easily accessible by six interstates. The only toll road is the West Virginia Turnpike, Interstate-77 between Princeton and Charleston. Electric vehicle charging stations are also available around the state, including free stations located within several state parks.

Travel Advice

For the most current travel information, go to *transportation.wv.gov* or visit a Welcome Center, where you can pick up brochures and paper maps.

Health and Safety

Call 1-800-887-4304, or visit *www.coronavirus.wv.gov* or *wvtourism.com/travel-responsibly* for information.


PENNSYLVANIA
OHIO
VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
TENNESSEE
CLEVELAND TO WHEELING 167 MI
PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH TO MORGANTOWN 76 MI
JOHNSTOWN
JOHNSTOWN TO MORGANTOWN 107 MI
NEW YORK CITY TO MORGANTOWN 378 MI
HARRISBURG
HARRISBURG TO MORGANTOWN 212 MI
PHILADELPHIA TO MORGANTOWN 308 MI
COLUMBUS
COLUMBUS TO CHARLESTON 163 MI
WEIRTON
WHEELING
MOUNDSVILLE
MORGANTOWN
FAIRMONT
PHILIPPI
CLARKSBURG
BUCKHANNON
PARKERSBURG
CAIRO
RIPLEY
POINT PLEASANT
WESTON
FLATWOODS
SUTTON
PARSONS
ELKINS
DAVIS
FRANKLIN
MOOREFIELD
ROMNEY
BERKELEY SPRINGS
BALTIMORE TO MARTINSBURG 89 MI
MARTINSBURG
SHEPHERDSTOWN
RANSON
D.C. TO HARPERS FERRY 63 MI
CHARLES TOWN
HARPERS FERRY
WASHINGTON, D.C.
HUNTINGTON
CHARLESTON
FAYETTEVILLE
SUMMERSVILLE
MARLINTON
NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE
MADISON
WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS
LOGAN
BECKLEY
LEWISBURG
WILLIAMSON
PRINCETON
BLUEFIELD
ROANOKE TO WSS 81 MI
ROANOKE
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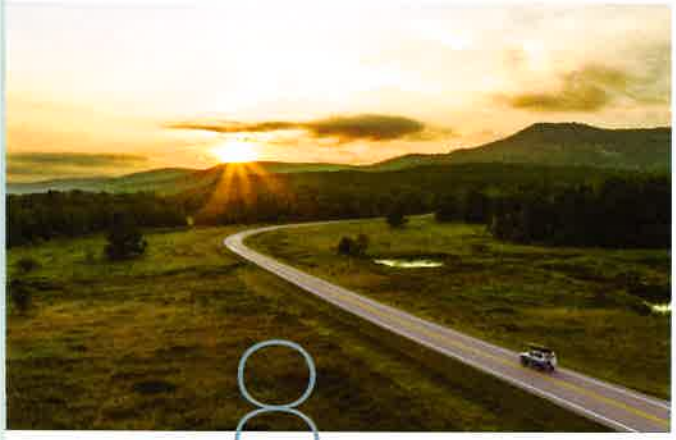
2021 WEST VIRGINIA VACATION GUIDE



8 Country Roads

There's a reason why the John Denver song resonates. In every region, find a sense of home and belonging amid quaint towns and breathtaking scenery.

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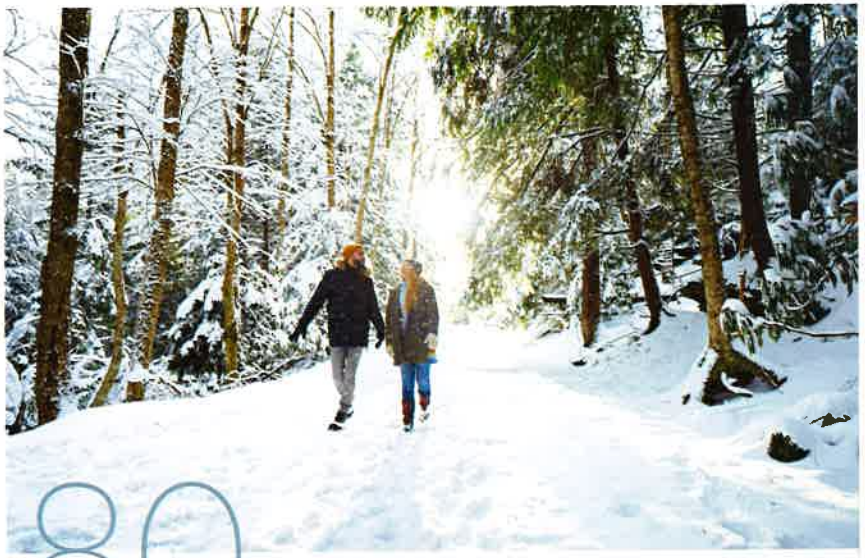
Escape city lights to see what a night sky is *supposed* to look like. It's a powerful perspective.



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Yes, they still make moonshine here, but also beers and spirits full of local fruits and grains.

92 **FALL FOR ALMOST HEAVEN**
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After 50 years, John Denver's "Country Roads" still resonates. Explore the wonders of the state through his eyes.

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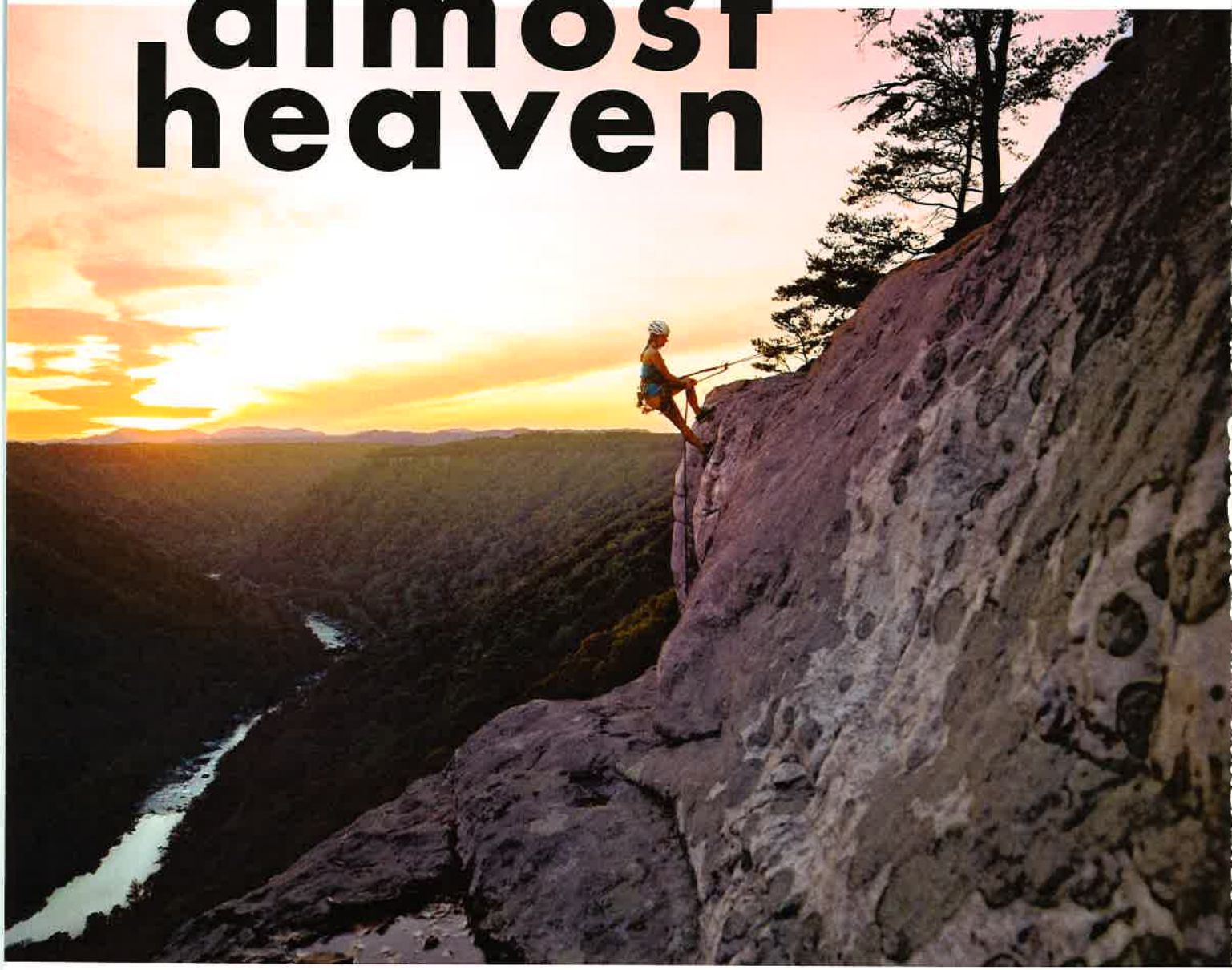
WV promises Insta gratification.

WELCOME TO

almost heaven



Trade the chatter and clatter of everyday routines for what's real, simple and unchanging: sun, sky, mountains, trees, water. In West Virginia, there's all the time in the world and plenty of open space to be yourself and feel at home. Come live in the moment, free of yesterday and tomorrow. Come feel the mystery, the wonder, the surprise. Come climb a little closer to heaven.

WEST VIRGINIA

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AlmostHeaven

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FIFTY YEARS AFTER ITS RELEASE, JOHN DENVER'S "COUNTRY ROADS" IS STILL THE BEST SONG TO HEAR WHILE DRIVING THROUGH WEST VIRGINIA, AND IS A LOVE LETTER TO THE STATE'S BREATHTAKING VIEWS AND POINTS OF INTEREST. THESE ITINERARIES GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE NINE REGIONS, HIGHLIGHTING KEY STOPS AND PHOTO OPS ALONG THE WAY.

Eastern Panhandle

THIS TWO-DAY TRIP, THOUGH ONLY 55 MILES, IS STACKED WITH HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT TOWNS, PICTURESQUE SPOTS AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURES.

Start **BERKELEY SPRINGS** | End **HARPERS FERRY**

ABOVE
The famously restorative mineral springs at Berkeley Springs State Park have been frequented since Colonial times.

START OUTSIDE OF BERKELEY SPRINGS with a sweeping view of Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia from the **Panorama Overlook** off of WV-9. Continue east to Berkeley Springs, where a young George Washington once enjoyed the town's natural mineral springs. Stop at **Berkeley Springs State Park** for a soak in the recently renovated Roman bathhouse. Then spring for lunch at nearby **Tari's a Premier Cafe** (try the cream of crab soup) before taking twisty WV-9 southeast about 25 miles to Martinsburg. At the **Martinsburg Roundhouse** (open April to October), see the oldest covered roundhouse in the country and learn about the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's storied history in the region, both before and after the Civil War. Continue on to Shepherdstown, the state's oldest town. Stroll the **Shepherdstown Historic District** along

RIGHT
Shepherdstown, the oldest town in West Virginia, will win your heart with its charming shops and buildings, like the clock tower at McMurran Hall at Shepherd University.

German Street, lined with Federal-style brick houses dating to the late 18th century. At the **Shepherdstown Museum,** discover the town's role during the Civil War. Stay at the **Bavarian Inn,** set on a bluff overlooking the Potomac River. Have dinner in the hotel's Potomac Room, which offers German specialties like Wiener schnitzel.

In the morning, enjoy pastries at **Shepherdstown Sweet Shop Bakery** on German Street, then take Flowing Springs Road for a stop in Charles Town, named for George Washington's brother. Amble through the graveyard at **Zion Episcopal Church,** the final resting place of more than 70 Washington

RIGHT
Located between the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, Shepherdstown was the site of many Civil War battles. Today, it's a history buff's dream; many of its battle sites are preserved for re-enactments.

descendants. Swing by the **Jefferson County Courthouse,** the site of John Brown's treason trial, before pushing on to Harpers Ferry, at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers. At **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park,** take a ranger-guided tour to see historic houses along Shenandoah, High and Potomac streets, plus John Brown's Fort, the site of his failed abolitionist raid. After lunch at **The Rabbit Hole,** choose your own adventure: Take a guided rafting tour at **River Riders Family Adventure Resort** or hike the **Appalachian Trail** from downtown Harpers Ferry.

Take a selfie in George Washington's tub (the nation's only outdoor presidential bathing monument) at Berkeley Springs State Park.

Life is old there, older than the trees | Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze

50 COUNTRY ROADS

Potomac Highlands

FARMLANDS AND FORESTS, QUAINT SMALL TOWNS AND MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS: YOU'LL SEE IT ALL ON THIS TWO-DAY DRIVE ACROSS THE STATE'S EASTERN EXPANSE.

Start **DAVIS** | End **CASS**

BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY by filling your camera with pretty pics at **Blackwater Falls State Park** outside of Davis. An easy-to-navigate boardwalk takes you close to the park's crown jewel, Blackwater Falls, a 57-foot amber-color cascade. The park's other popular pursuits include mountain biking, fishing and camping. Then wander through the picturesque mountain town of Davis, known for its art galleries, craft brews and spirits. Linger over an IPA at **Stumptown Ales** before heading south on WV-32. South of Harman, stop for a tasting at **Still Hollow Spirits,** a family-run distillery that makes small-batch whiskey using heirloom grains and mountain spring water. Continue southeast about 20 minutes to **Seneca Rocks** in the **Monongahela National Forest.** Start at the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center for a self-guided 1.3-mile interpretive hike to behold the dramatic white-gray rock formations towering 900 feet above the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac. Then push south along US-33 past green hills and farm fields to bunk up for the night at **Germany Valley Overlook Cabins** outside of Riverton. The porch of Lookout Cottage offers dramatic views of the valley below.

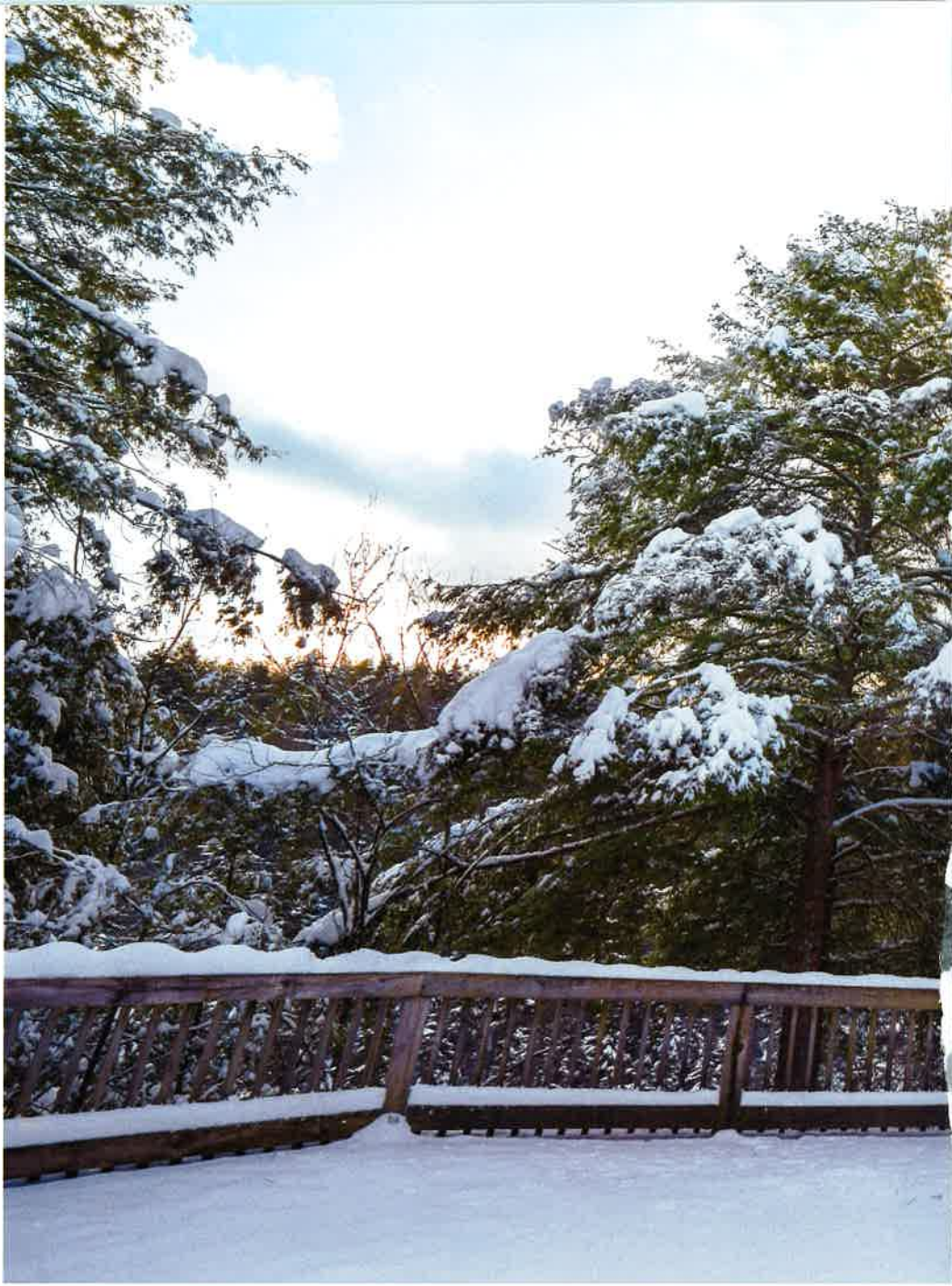
THIS PAGE
Hike to one of the state's most-photographed spots, the Lindy Park Overlook, for marvelous views of the Blackwater Canyon below.

Country roads, take me home / To the place I belong

THIS PAGE
Witness the still, calming nature of Blackwater Falls State Park in winter, when it's enveloped in powdery white.

Get an early start in the morning with breakfast at homey **Gateway Restaurant** before driving to the top of nearby **Spruce Knob** for sweeping mountain vistas from the highest point in the state. The half-mile Whispering Spruce Trail awards hikers unrivaled views of the North Fork valley. Continuing south on WV-28/92 toward Green Bank, take a moment to savor silence. You're in the National Radio Quiet Zone, a 13,000-square-mile area that protects the Green Bank Telescope from interference. See the massive telescope and interactive science exhibits at the nearby **Green Bank Observatory.** Continuing southwest about 15 minutes, arrive in Cass for lunch at **The Last Run Restaurant.** Then complete your amazing adventure at **Cass Scenic Railroad State Park.** The five-hour, round-trip ride on the steam locomotive takes passengers to Bald Knob, the third-highest peak in the state.

Quiet your mind—and your phone. Wi-Fi, cell service and most radio transmissions are restricted the closer you get to the Green Bank Telescope.

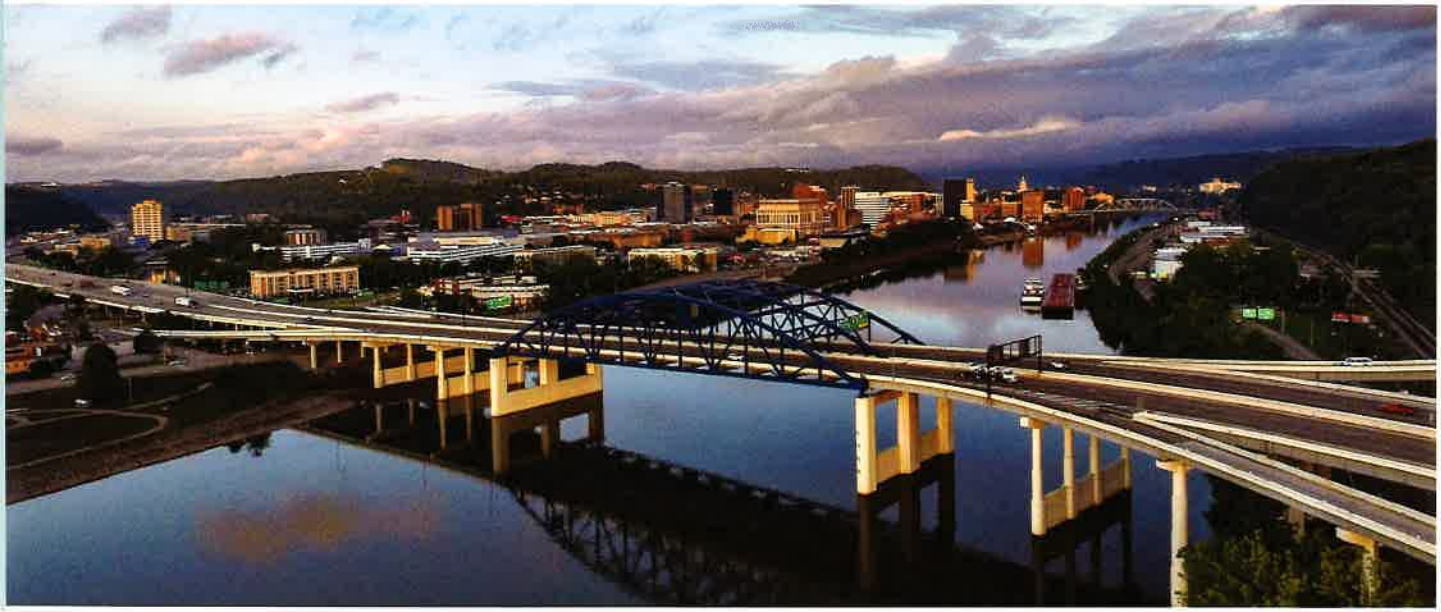


West Virginia, mountain mama/ Take me home, country roads

Metro Valley

TAKE IN THE STATE'S TWO LARGEST CITIES—HISTORY-RICH HUNTINGTON AND BUZZING CAPITAL CITY CHARLESTON—IN THIS DYNAMIC THREE-DAY TOUR.

Start **HUNTINGTON** | End **CHARLESTON**



START WITH A HEARTY BREAKFAST SANDWICH of locally sourced bacon and free-range eggs at **Butter It Up** in downtown Huntington, then drive south for a taste of the area's agricultural past at **Heritage Farm Museum and Village**, a Smithsonian affiliate. At this living-history museum, experience early pioneer life in Appalachia through a re-created frontier village. Driving back toward downtown, stop to smell the roses at **Ritter Park Rose Garden**—starting in May there are more than 3,000 blooming here. For lunch, fill up on empanadas at **Nomada Bakery,** then wander through the **Huntington Museum of Art's** galleries to find intricate ceramics and cool art glass. Stop at **Marshall University,** named after fourth Chief Justice of the U.S. John Marshall, on your way out of Huntington. Heading east on Interstate-64, arrive in Charleston for a cozy dinner at **Noah's Restaurant and Lounge,** then spend the night at **Brass Pineapple Inn,** a bed-and-breakfast in the historic district.

ABOVE
Charleston is the state's capital and most-populated city.

RIGHT
J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works is a one-stop shop for artisan salts and Appalachian-made goods, farm-to-table dinners, and free tours.

In the morning, step into a coal mine and meet famous West Virginians on the Capitol Complex grounds at the **West Virginia State Museum,** which traces the state's fascinating history chronologically. Wander the grounds along the Kanawha River and then grab lunch at indoor-outdoor **Capitol Market,** a bustling social hub. Down the

All my memories gather 'round her / Miner's lady, stranger to blue water

OUR CHOCOLATE
FOUNTAIN
Huyler's
CUSTOM BLEND
COCOA
SOLE
AGENT
Huyler's
Fine Candy

LEFT
Charleston's vibrant downtown scene is dotted with locally owned boutiques, art galleries, restaurants and nightlife options.

street, the **Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences** houses an art museum, planetarium, science discovery center and performance space. Dine at **Black Sheep Burrito and Brews** for Mexican with a twist (try the General Tso burrito) before you bed down for the night.

On your last day, take I-64 south to tour **J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works** in Malden, a family-owned salt-maker. Sample the artisanal salt, harvested from an ocean trapped below the Appalachian Mountains. Then head south to the **Kanawha State Forest** near Charleston. For a challenging-but-totally-worth-it hike, hit the 2-mile Overlook Rock Trail, where you'll spot mossy rocks, bubbling streams and stunning views of the hills and valley around. Finish back in Charleston with a barbecue lunch at **Dem 2 Brothers and a Grill** or a specialty pie at **Pies & Pints.**

Watch artists like wool spinners and potters at work at the Artisan Center at Huntington's Heritage Farm Museum and Village.

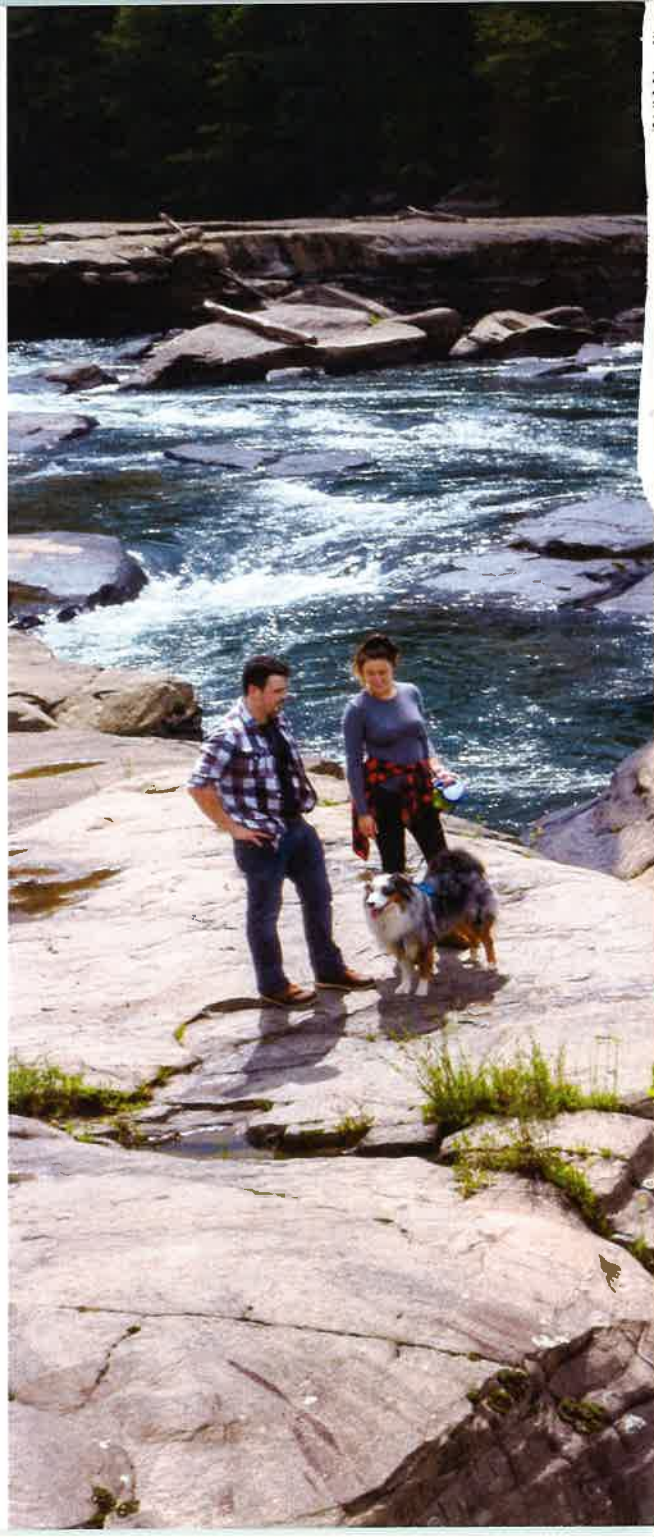
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky | Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye

Mountaineer Country

THE STATE'S RUGGED HILLS AND ROLLICKING HOME OF WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY STAR ON THIS TWO-DAY ROAD TRIP ACROSS A REGION KNOWN FOR WIDE-OPEN SPACES AND SCENIC BEAUTY.

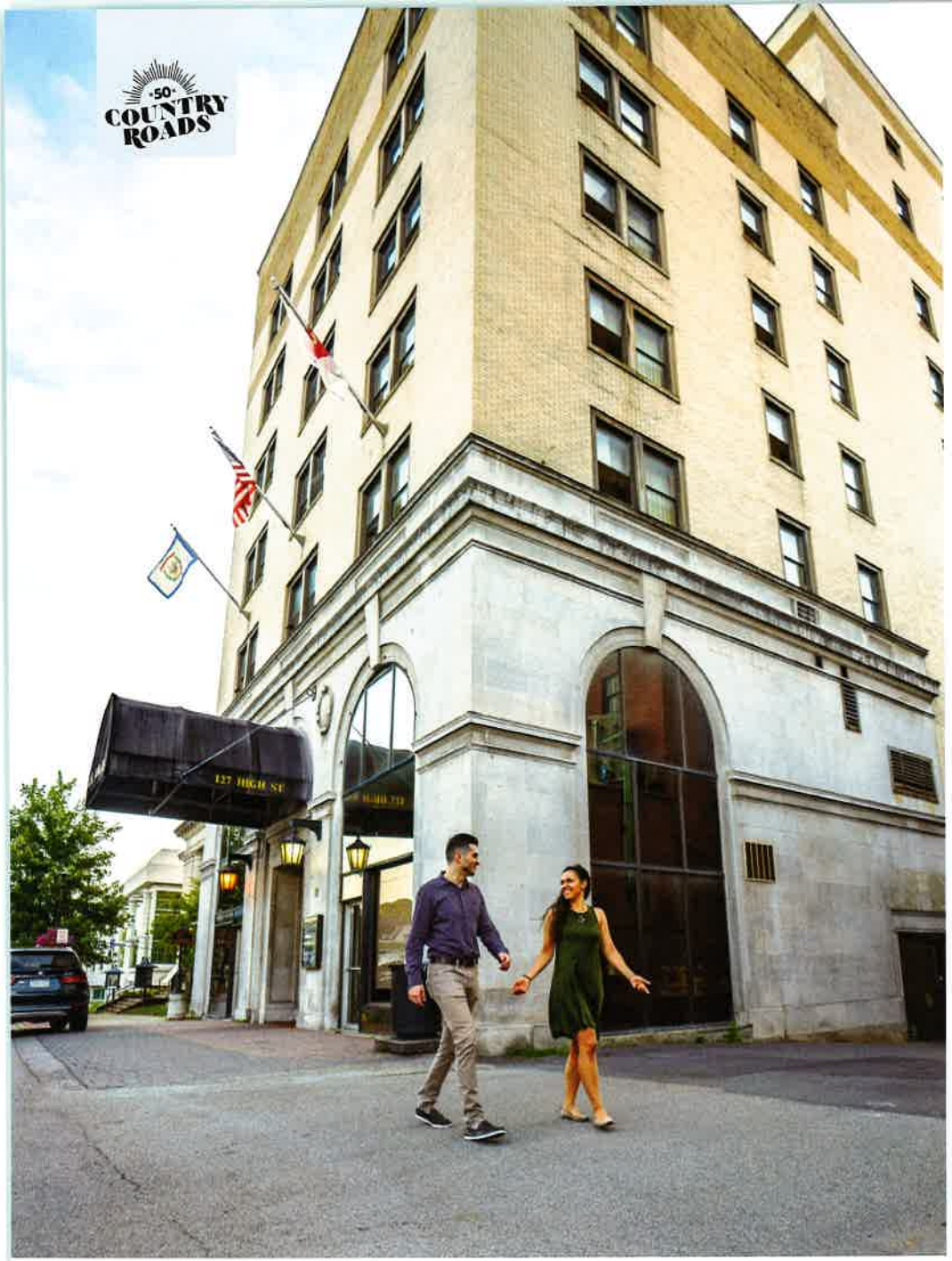
Start **MORGANTOWN** | End **PHILIPPI**

START WITH A COLD BREW and breakfast sandwiches from **The Grind** in downtown Morgantown, a spirited college town on the banks of the Monongahela River. Then roll east, crossing over picturesque Cheat Lake, to **Coopers Rock State Forest.** Follow signs to the Coopers Rock Overlook to soak up expansive views of the Cheat River Gorge. For an easy and scenic hike, take the 1.4-mile Rock City Trail, which winds through a maze of rock formations and a rhododendron forest. Back in Morgantown, enjoy elevated gastropub fare at **Iron Horse Tavern.** Then browse 19th- to 21st-century works at the **Art Museum of WVU,** view wildflowers at the university-owned **Core Arboretum,** or shop for herbal tea and gifts at the **Seneca Center.** Coast south on Interstate-79 for **Pricketts Fort State Park.** See the re-created rustic log fort that served as a refuge on the western frontier of Colonial Virginia and watch interpreters in period costumes demonstrate crafts like basketry and blacksmithing. Continuing south on I-79, take a detour near Fairmont to see **Valley Falls State Park;** its four cascades provide



OPPOSITE
A series of four rushing waterfalls, plus miles of hiking and biking trails and fishing opportunities await visitors seeking adventure in Valley Falls State Park.

Country roads, take me home / To the place I belong



THIS PAGE
Spend a few hours shopping and strolling around historic downtown Morgantown.
OPPOSITE
Discover enchanting views from the overlook at Coopers Rock State Forest.

a peaceful pause. Back in Fairmont, don't miss a chance to refuel at **Country Club Bakery,** creator of the unofficial state snack, the pepperoni roll. Then follow US-19 toward Shinnston for a stay at the **Gillum House Bed and Breakfast,** a cozy inn with special details, such as bikes for traversing the nearby rail-trail.

In the morning, pack a picnic and fishing poles for a leisurely morning at **Tygart Lake State Park,** about 40 minutes southeast. (Call ahead to reserve a boat at Tygart Lake Marina.) Take in mountain views as you float along the 1,750-acre lake. Back on land, head south on US-250 as you cruise toward the riverside community of Philippi, site of the first land battle of the Civil War. End your trip with a drive across the 285-foot-long **Philippi Covered Bridge,** the longest covered bridge in the state.

Spy a statue of WVU star and basketball legend Jerry West outside of the WVU Coliseum. His iconic silhouette is featured on the NBA logo.

West Virginia, mountain mama/ Take me home, country roads

Mountain Lakes

THIS TWO-DAY DRIVE IS WHAT ROAD TRIPS ARE MADE OF: BENDING MOUNTAIN HIGHWAYS, SPARKLING LAKES AND PLACES TO SOAK UP NATURE'S SPLENDOR.

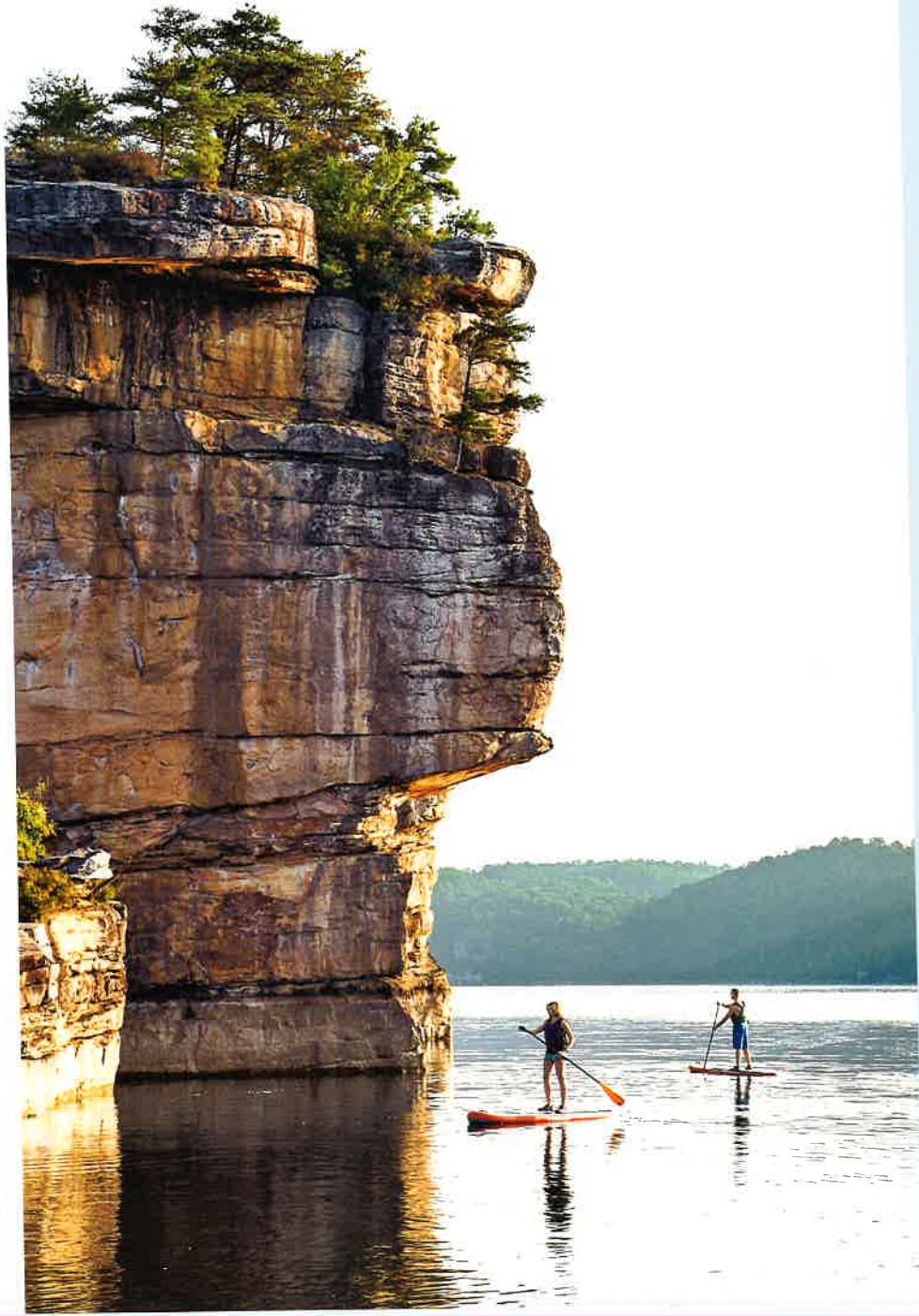
Start **SUMMERSVILLE** | End **FRENCH CREEK**

START YOUR TRIP AT SUMMERSVILLE LAKE, the state's largest lake and the clearest freshwater body of water east of the Mississippi. Pack a picnic for lunch at the beach and then spend a leisurely afternoon fishing, paddling or even scuba diving in the 28,000–acre lake flanked by quiet coves and vertical cliffs. When you've had enough surf and sun, head north on US-19 past rolling hills and rugged mountains. Arrive at **Stonewall Resort State Park** in Roanoke for more repose: Visit the spa, go for a hike, or play golf on the Arnold Palmer Signature course. Enjoy an Appalachian-theme dinner at the resort's on-site restaurant, **Stillwaters,** then stay in the Adirondack-style Stonewall Lodge overlooking a peaceful lake.

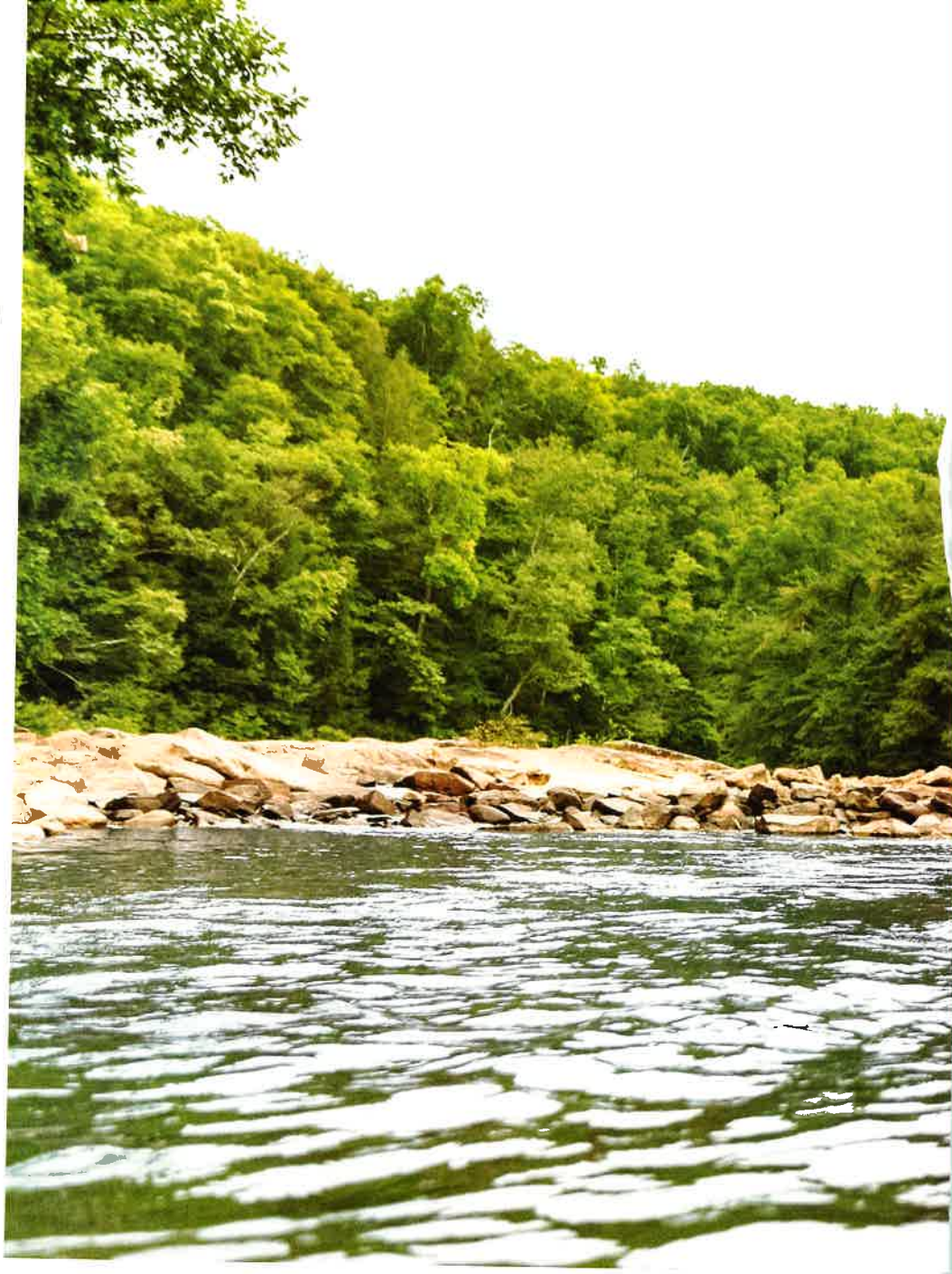
ABOVE
Experience lake life at its finest at Stonewall Resort State Park, a secluded retreat enveloped by rolling hills.

I hear her voice in the mornin' hour, she calls me

RIGHT
Summersville Lake offers more than 28,000 acres of irresistibly clear waters for boating, kayaking, fishing and scuba diving.



In the morning, push north to Weston for a tour of the **Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum,** a former psychiatric hospital and the largest hand-cut stone masonry building in North America. Learn about the history and haunting of this imposing castle-like structure. Make your escape for a lunch of hearty salads or sandwiches at **Thyme Bistro** in downtown Weston. Just down the street, behold an impressive collection of colorful glass vessels and a stained-glass doll house at the **Museum of American Glass.** Drive east toward Buckhannon to wander through the city's shops and galleries before heading to **Audra State Park,** a hidden gem just



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Just outside of Buckhannon, Audra State Park beckons travelers of all ages with unspoiled beauty in the form of heavily wooded grounds and pristine streams.

outside of town. Take the 2.7-mile Alum Cave Trail, which traverses a cliffside boardwalk with views of the Middle Fork River. You're in luck if you happen upon the park in spring when the state flower, rhododendrons, are in bloom.

Take WV-20 south to experience even more of West Virginia's rich wildlife heritage in Upshur County at French Creek's **West Virginia State Wildlife Center,** where visitors can see many of the state's native and reintroduced animals, like wolves and black bears, in their natural habitats.

Take a daytime paranormal tour of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum, or test your nerve during an overnight ghost hunt.

The radio reminds me of my home far away

50 COUNTRY ROADS

Mid-Ohio Valley

MEANDER THROUGH THE CHARMING RIVERFRONT CITIES AND ACROSS ROLLING COUNTRY HIGHWAYS OF NORTHWEST WEST VIRGINIA IN THIS TWO-DAY TOUR STARRING HISTORIC CHARACTERS, ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS AND SCENIC BEAUTY.

Start **WILLIAMSTOWN** | End **RIPLEY**

START AT HENDERSON HALL in Williamstown, a well-preserved plantation overlooking the Ohio River. Tour the Italianate mansion (open March through December) crammed with historic significance (a newspaper announcing George Washington's death) and curious artifacts. Then drive southeast to Cairo, where you can rent mountain bikes at **Country Trails Bikes** for the mostly gravel and dirt **North Bend Rail Trail,** a scenic 72-mile jaunt that traverses 36 bridges and 10 mountain tunnels. Stop for a picnic at **North Bend State Park,** set in a lush valley along the North Fork of the Hughes River.

Motor south on WV-31 to WV-53 and take winding, tree-lined roads west past charming small towns. At the **Stone Road Vineyard** outside of Elizabeth, pick up road trip-themed wines like One Way White and Stoplight Red. (Call first to schedule a tasting.) Arriving in Parkersburg, check into **The Blennerhassett Hotel,** rich with history and a mix of architecture styles. For dinner, nosh on baba ghanouj and shish kabob at family-owned **Chams Lebanese Cuisine** a short walk away. If you can, catch a performance at the beautifully restored **Smoot Theatre,** a one-time vaudeville house that now hosts musical and theater acts year-round.

RIGHT
Take a leisurely walk along the wooded trails at North Bend State Park, named for the horseshoe bend of the North Fork of the Hughes River.

Drivin' down the road, I get a feelin'

50
COUNTRY
ROADS
MARKET STREET
THE
HOTEL

THIS PAGE
Downtown Parkersburg twinkles at night.
OPPOSITE
See history at The Blennerhassett Hotel.

After coffee and breakfast crepes at **Unity Cafe,** take a stern-wheeler boat from Point Park across the Ohio River to **Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park** (open May through October). Tour the replica of a Palladian mansion once owned by Irish lawyer and politician **Harman Blennerhassett** and discover how his entanglement with Aaron Burr, the third vice president of the U.S., led to disaster. Back in Parkersburg, the **Oil and Gas Museum** explores the industry's role in the region. Build your own burger at **Parkersburg Brewing Company.** (Options include house-made condiments like beer mustard.) Stroll through the **Julia-Ann Square Historic District**—the state's oldest and largest—to admire Victorian-, Queen Ann- and Second Empire-style homes. Finally, follow I-77 south to the **Appalachian Distillery** in Ripley for a taste of its signature apple pie moonshine. Next door, the **Fairplain Yacht Club** caters to late-night cravings.

Gaze at the cosmos in Calhoun County Park in Grantsville. Named a Dark Sky destination, it's one of the country's best places to stargaze.

That I should've been home yesterday, yesterday

New River/Greenbrier

COURSE THROUGH SOME OF THE PRETTIEST SPOTS IN THE STATE ON THIS THREE-DAY DRIVE FEATURING AMERICA'S NEW NATIONAL PARK.

Start **CLIFFTOP** | End **MARLINTON**

WAKE UP IN A RUSTIC CABIN at **Babcock State Park** in Clifftop, famous for the Glade Creek Grist Mill, a working mill and one of the state's most photographed spots. Then take US-60 northwest and detour at **Hawks Nest State Park** for bird's-eye views of the New River Gorge from a clifftop overlook. Backtrack on US-60 east to US-19, continuing southwest toward the **New River Gorge National Park & Preserve.** At **Canyon Rim Visitor Center,** learn about one of the largest steel arch spans in the western hemisphere, then head to the back deck to admire its beauty. Back on the road, marvel at the landscape as you cross one of the highest vehicular bridges in the world into Fayetteville. Park for lunch featuring local and seasonal flavors at **The Station.** Fayetteville is a playground for outdoor enthusiasts; pick from whitewater rafting, mountain biking or hiking. After your afternoon adventure, continue south on US-19 toward Beckley. At **Tamarack,** meet artists and take home West Virginia-made gifts. Then motor south on I-77 to the historic town of Bramwell on the Bluestone River. Follow US-52 south past rolling green mountains to stay in a cabin at **Pipestem Resort State Park.**

In the morning, see the Bluestone River Gorge as you soar along a zipline tour, or ride the aerial tram to

ABOVE
Find serenity at Beauty Mountain, a stretch of sandstone cliffs and boulders along the rim of the New River Gorge.

RIGHT
In fall, the trees lining the New River turn from lush greens to reds and golds.

Country roads, take me home | To the place I belong

RIGHT
The Greenbrier resort looks worthy of a postcard, especially set against a patchwork of autumnal hues.

the bottom for pretty panoramas. Continue north on WV-20 toward the **Hinton Historic District,** where you can visit notable buildings along the picturesque New River. Journey east about 45 miles to Lewisburg to explore its downtown antiques shops; then enjoy magical sandwiches at **Stardust Cafe.** North of town, see stalactites and stalagmites 120 feet below the earth at **Lost World Caverns.** Travel east to **The Greenbrier** resort for a final stop on your day's adventure. Play a round of golf, soak in the mineral spa or visit the casino at the stately resort.

The next day, amble north on WV-92 for your trip's final leg: a ride on the **Greenbrier River Trail,** a 78-mile rail-trail offering some of the most scenic and remote landscapes in the state. **Appalachian Sport** in Marlinton offers bike rentals and shuttle service.

Get swept up in the nostalgia of The Corner Store, an old-fashioned soda fountain and gift shop in historic Bramwell known for its homemade ice cream.

West Virginia, mountain mama/ Take me home, country roads

Northern Panhandle

FIND OUTDOOR ADVENTURES, SURPRISING SIGHTS AND PASTORAL BEAUTY ON THIS TWO-DAY DRIVE THROUGH THE STATE'S NORTHERNMOST REGION, BORDERED BY THE OHIO RIVER TO THE NORTH AND WEST AND PENNSYLVANIA TO THE EAST.

Start **CHESTER** | End **MOUNDSVILLE**

START AT THE TOP OF THE STATE, in Chester, for a selfie with the world's largest teapot. (Warning: "I'm a Little Teapot" will be wedged in your brain the rest of your trip.) Follow the Ohio River west to Newell for a stop at the **Homer Laughlin China Company Factory.** Learn about the company—known for its colorful Fiesta dinnerware—which has had roots in the Ohio River Valley since the 1870s. Continue south on WV-2, a winding two-lane road that shoulders the Ohio River. Arriving in Wheeling, take in the towering **Wheeling Suspension Bridge,** the longest bridge of its kind in the world when it was completed in 1849. The first bridge to cross the Ohio River, it later became strategically important during the Civil War. Pause for sandwiches and burgers with organic ingredients from local farms at downtown Wheeling's **Public Market.** Walk to the nearby **West Virginia Independence Hall,** where West Virginia statehood was born of heated political debates and constitutional conventions. From there, peruse the antiques and specialty stores in and around **Centre Market,** an 1850s public market house. When you're ready to unwind, hit **Oglebay Resort,** a sprawling retreat that includes a 36-hole golf course, restaurants, a zoo and spa.

OPPOSITE
The Ohio River Valley is steeped in historic sites—especially this scenic stretch in Wheeling, the former state capital.

Country roads, take me home | To the place I belong

THIS PAGE
For an aerial view of Moundsville, climb the wall at Grand Vue Park.
OPPOSITE
Grab a seat around the fire and make s'mores at Oglebay Resort

The next day, head southeast out of Wheeling for a tour of the **Palace of Gold,** a glittering hilltop estate originally designed for the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Today the spiritual center draws visitors to its ornate rooms and fragrant gardens. Then take country roads past rolling farm fields toward Moundsville. At **Grand Vue Park,** get a treetop view of West Virginia from a zipline or test your nerves on a high-ropes course. Stop in Moundsville at **Bob's Lunch** for classic comfort food, then tour the former **West Virginia State Penitentiary**—if you dare. Spirits of previous inmates are said to haunt the imposing Gothic-style building. End your trip with a visit to the nearby **Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex,** one of the largest conical burial mounds in the U.S., and learn about the Adena People who once lived here.

Slumber in the trees at Grand Vue Park's Treetop Villas in Moundsville. The luxury cabins on stilts have full kitchens and overlook the Ohio River Valley.

West Virginia, mountain mama! Take me home, country roads

Hatfield-McCoy Mountains

GET LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THIS RUGGED REGION. ROLLING TWO-LANE COUNTRY ROADS AND HIGHWAYS WIND PAST RECREATIONAL THRILLS AND THE SITES OF A FAMOUS FEUD IN THIS TWO-DAY DRIVE ACROSS THE SOUTHWESTERN CORNER OF WEST VIRGINIA.

Start **WILLIAMSON** | End **MATEWAN**

A BUILDING MADE OF COAL: There's perhaps no better way to start your visit to this region. At downtown Williamson's **Coal House,** made of 65 tons of black gold and home to the Tug Valley Chamber of Commerce, get a lay of the land before you start your adventure. Next door, peek into coal country's rich past in the historic **Mountaineer Hotel's** well-preserved lobby. Then venture off-road to the **Hatfield-McCoy Trails,** one of the country's largest ATV, UTV and dirt bike trail systems. Zip along dirt roads, stopping for panoramic vistas of the surrounding countryside where the feuding families once waged war.

Park your ATV back in Williamson, fuel up on sandwiches and wraps at **34:Ate,** and then take the winding US-119 northeast to **Chief Logan State Park.** Located on two sides of a mountain, the park offers glimpses of abandoned coal mines and rare wildflowers

OPPOSITE
See wildlife, hike and kick back at Chief Logan State Park, surrounded by the beautiful mountains of southern West Virginia. Park visitors can also camp here or stay at the nearby Chief Logan Lodge.

Take me home, down country roads / To the place I belong

along 18 miles of hiking trails. If you can, nab a tour with a naturalist to learn about the park's elk management program and see other natives like black bears, bobcats and wild boars. Dine on hot dogs and homemade onion rings at **Morrison's Drive Inn** in nearby Logan, then bunk up for the night at **Chief Logan State Park Lodge** or a luxury cabin in the park.

In the morning, swing by **Nu-Era Bakery,** a local mainstay serving from-scratch baked goods. Then point your car south to the **Hatfield and McCoy Moonshine Distillery** in Gilbert for a tour and tasting of the small-batch moonshine recipe handed down from Devil Anse Hatfield. Continue on about 25 miles west to Matewan's **West Virginia Mine Wars Museum** to explore the struggles that took place as miners fought for rights in the early 1900s. The building still bears bullet holes from the 1920 Matewan massacre shoot-out. Finally, round out your trip with an hour-long **Hatfield and McCoy Airboat Tour** down the Tug River.

Look for names of famous Mountaineer Hotel guests, like John F. Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt, inscribed on plaques outside each room.

Take me home, down country roads

guidebook

FOLLOW WINDING ROADS THROUGH WEST VIRGINIA TO WITNESS ITS INVITING TOWNS, HIDDEN-GEM DESTINATIONS AND REMARKABLE VIEWS—AND FEEL LIKE A LOCAL IN NO TIME WITH THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Unleash your wild side as you navigate rapids with the imposing New River Gorge Bridge as your backdrop.

play

GET OUTSIDE

Whether your ideal thrill takes place on water, land or at the top of a roller coaster, these family-approved ventures aim to please.

River Expeditions

NEW AND GAULEY RIVERS

Calm pools alternate with roller-coaster waves when you raft these rivers.

Camden Park

HUNTINGTON

See the kids' glee at West Virginia's only amusement park. It's been an institution for more than 100 years.

City Park Disc Golf Course

BARBOURSVILLE

Challenge friends to Frisbee golf at this18-hole course around Lake William.

Little Creek Golf Course

SOUTH CHARLESTON

Perfect your swing at this challenging 18-hole course that winds through the mountains.

Pack up the car and wind through the Canaan Valley's gorgeous mountain scenery.

stay

RETREATS

Cozy cabins and roomy vacation rentals: There's no better way to kick back in the backcountry and spend time with your crew.

Hemlock Haven Cabins

HICO

Bring the whole family (even the dog) to hole up in a luxurious cabin and get away from it all.

Black Bear Resort

CANAAN VALLEY

Stay in your own cabin, suite or home at Black Bear Resort, set on 40 picturesque acres in the Canaan Valley.

Summersville Lake Retreat

SUMMERSVILLE

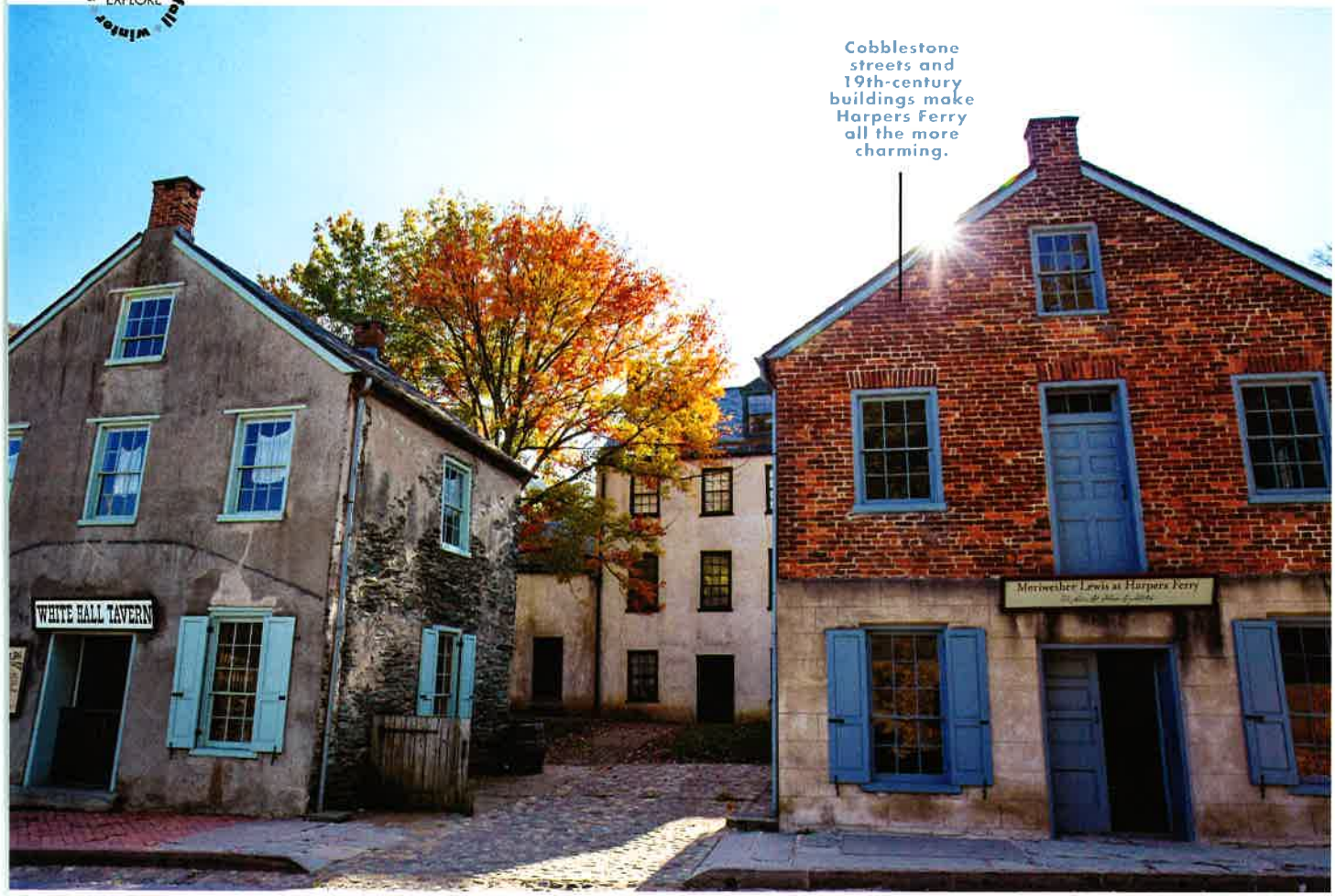
Relax and put your feet up after a day splashing around Summersville Lake, West Virginia's largest lake.

Mountaineer Casino Racetrack and Resort

NEW CUMBERLAND

Catch a race, roll the dice and be pampered—all at one stylish resort.

WANT MORE? Hover your phone's camera over the code for more year-round attractions. ***wvtourism.com/information-and-press/contact***



Cobblestone streets and 19th-century buildings make Harpers Ferry all the more charming.

discover

CONNECT

Unearth history and hidden gems at these A-list escapes.

Civil War Stories

RANSON

Ranson and its surrounding towns are infused with Civil War history. Retrace soldiers' steps along the Shenandoah River, hike the Appalachian Trail, and take in the beauty of the Blue Ridge mountains.

Lost River State Park

MATHIAS

Nestled in the mountains of Hardy County, this state park is a peaceful, outdoor-lover's paradise. Hike to Cranny Crow overlook on top of Big Ridge Mountain for a commanding view of five counties.

National Coal Heritage

OAK HILL

Let the region's rich coal heritage guide you through 13 counties in southern West Virginia. Learn about the lives of coal barons, follow the Coal Heritage Trail, or go underground at the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine.

Look for birds and other wildlife along the quiet trails of Lost River State Park.

experience

DIAL IN

Enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of West Virginia in our great state and beyond.

Berdine's Five and Dime

HARRISVILLE

Step back in time at America's oldest dime store. Pick up a souvenir or candy from its famous oak case.

Putnam Farmers Market

VALLEY PARK

Shop for produce, jams and trinkets with the locals on Saturdays from May through October.

Mountain Stage

STATEWIDE

Tune in to hear live and recorded performances by favorite Appalachian artists.

SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

adventure

spring + summer

Longer days and warmer weather signal the start of vacation season. Here's where to unwind, adventure and make lasting memories.

cool connections

Pic-Perfect Spans

These picturesque bridges do more than cross bodies of water. They connect the past and present in photogenic style.

Wheeling Suspension Bridge

WHEELING

The New River Gorge Bridge may be the most photographed bridge in the state, but here's another one worthy of your camera lens. At 1,010 feet long from pier to pier, this bridge is the most scenic way to traverse the Ohio River. Not only was it the first bridge to do so, it was also the longest suspension span in the world until the Brooklyn Bridge was completed.

Blennerhassett Island Bridge

PARKERSBURG

The Blennerhassett Historical State Park may only be accessible via riverboat from May to October, but you can catch a unique bird's-eye view of it any time of year thanks to this award-winning bridge. Its network arch design carries US-50 over the island and Ohio River, connecting West Virginia and Ohio.

Staats Mill Covered Bridge

RIPLEY

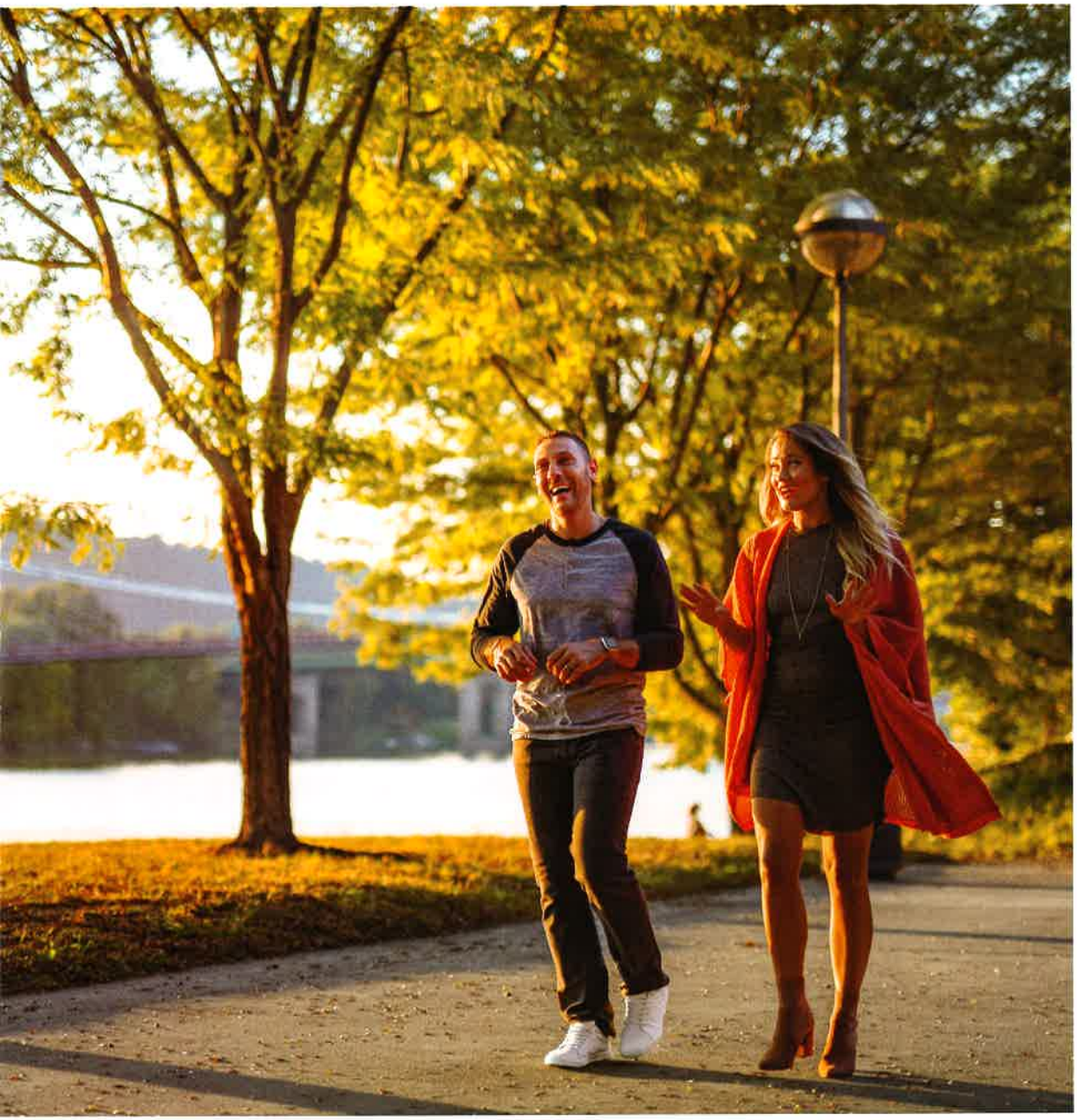
Pack a picnic lunch, lace up your shoes, and go explore this spectacular fusion of structural engineering and rustic charm. Named for the early-settling Staats family, the timber bridge was originally built adjacent to the mill and traversed Mill Creek. It was moved to its current location at Cedar Lake Park in 1982 and is now open only to pedestrian traffic.

Philippi Covered Bridge

PHILIPPI

About 11 miles south of Audra State Park is Philippi, a small city steeped in Civil War history. Head downtown to drive through the state's oldest "twin-barreled" covered bridge to glimpse its original wooden trusses and support beams. Legend has it that Abraham Lincoln discussed peace terms in secret here near the end of the war.

Built in pre-automobile days, the Wheeling Suspension Bridge spans the main channel of the Ohio River. It still carries limited vehicle traffic today.



More Bridges

- **Barrackville Covered Bridge**
  BARRACKVILLE, MARION COUNTY
  During the Civil War, a local couple convinced a Confederate general not to burn the 1853 bridge.

- **Indian Creek Covered Bridge**
  UNION, MONROE COUNTY
  Built in 1898 by Ray and Oscar Weikel—ages 16 and 18 at the time.

- **Locust Creek Covered Bridge**
  HILLSBORO, POCAHONTAS COUNTY
  Built in the 1870s, the most remote of the state's covered bridges now carries only pedestrian traffic.

travel on foot

Walking Tours

Venture safely through the Mountain State with outdoors-focused tours that give access to history, art and more.

Bridge Walk LANSING

See the familiar New River Gorge Bridge in America's new national park from a fresh perspective—a catwalk 25 feet below the road. The two- to three-hour tour starts at the Bridge Walk headquarters. A short path leads to the 24-inch-wide catwalk, which you follow all the way across—3,030 feet. Have no fear: There's a sturdy railing and guests are fastened onto a safety cable.

Food Tours WHEELING

Walk, eat, repeat. That's the simple recipe for these strolls through Wheeling's history and culinary diversity. Recipes from European immigrants made the town a melting pot of flavors, and today's adventurous chefs have stirred it up even more. Depending on the tour, you'll visit five to seven restaurants, sampling dishes at each—enough for a meal by the end.

Historic District

LEWISBURG

For a small town, Lewisburg claims a large number of historic structures, including the Old Stone Church (built in 1796), and The Barracks, constructed before and used in the War of 1812. A self-guided walking tour celebrates the town's history and architecture. Get a map at the Greenbrier Valley Visitors Center or online. Each building on the tour has a plaque with a number corresponding to the map.

Downtown ArtWalk

CHARLESTON

More than two dozen galleries and businesses take part in this free monthly self-guided tour that brings hundreds of people downtown to stroll, shop and appreciate the creativity of the local art community in all its forms—paintings, sculptures, photography, music and more. Now celebrating 19 years, ArtWalk is typically held on the third Thursday evening of each month.

Seneca Caverns

RIVERTON

This one-hour guided trek dips 165 feet below the entrance to the caverns and past visually stunning geological formations millions of years old. Handrails and concrete steps make the journey safe for visitors of all ages. It really is a cool experience—about 52 degrees year-round.

Millionaire Row homes, Bramwell

In the early 1900s, more than a dozen millionaires lived in this small town on the Bluestone River, having used their coal mining fortunes to build Victorian- and Tudor-style mansions. See inside during the tour of homes in June.

Wine Time

If you haven't heard it through the grapevine, WV wineries offer a surprising variety of vintages. And sweet scenery.

Casa di Vino in Wheeling stocks more than 300 wines from around the world, including several local varieties. Swing by and pick up a few new favorites to enjoy at home!

Kirkwood Winery and Isaiah Morgan Distillery

SUMMERSVILLE

The region's first vineyard had a rough start—it was wiped out by a harsh winter and drought. But the owners replanted, and now about 5 acres produce 40 tons of grapes each year for their reds and whites. The on-site distillery inside crafts bourbon, rye, moonshine and grappa spirits, plus new cinnamon shine and barrel-finished rye.

Chestnut Ridge Winery

SPENCER

Sample more than 30 dry, semidry and semisweet varieties while enjoying scenery you wish they could bottle. The winery sits at the trailhead of Ben's Run Trail, with deck and patio seating offering views of the forest and countryside. Try a nice chilled Gewürztraminer—it hits the spot on a warm day. Meet Merlot, the wine dog.

WineTree Vineyards

VIENNA

This farm winery's name came from the owners' son, then a wide-eyed 5-year-old looking up at a dwarf plum tree with fruit resembling grapes. "Look, Daddy," he said, "a wine tree!" Taste reds, whites and sweet wines (such as Catawba) made on-site mostly from the farm's grapes. The Noiret (a dry red), a Riesling and Chardonnay win raves.

Batton Hollow Winery

LOST CREEK

An owner and Air Force veteran with a degree in chemistry has a fine formula for winning over visitors—fine wine plus a naturally relaxing environment. Rustic Red (semisweet) and Vidal Blanc (a soft, semidry), go down easy on a hot summer day. Or refresh with seasonal favorite Summer Breeze, a sweet white made with Vidal Blanc grapes.

splashy fun

Water Shows

When temperatures rise, cool off by the water—or in it. Head to hydro-centric attractions designed by humans and nature.

ACE Adventure Resort

OAK HILL

At the resort's ACE Waterpark, kids (and kids at heart) can climb giant inflatable mountains before plunging into the spring-fed lake, splash into the water on a zipline, or launch each other into the water on the air blob. Choose a worthy competitor to race down the twin 200-foot-long water slides or reach new heights jumping on trampolines, while the littlest ones play on the new splash pad adjacent to the lake. At the end of the day when the crew is tuckered out from water-fueled fun, grab a tasty slice of wood-fired pizza to enjoy on the beach while the sun sets. Season, full-day and half-day passes are available.

Alpine Lake Resort

TERRA ALTA

It's easy to make a splash here, whether you're swimming, fishing or kayaking at the lake; relaxing in the pool; or playing the lakeside golf course. (Errant shots can find the water on a couple of holes.) Stay for the weekend in the on-site hotel, or stick around longer with a vacation cabin rental. Multiple dining and lounge options mean you never really have to leave.

Adventure Lake and Splash Pad

PIPESTEM

Rethink your notions of state parks. Pipestem's new splash park features 15 spraying, dumping or playing water installations to delight little kids, while the adventure lake offers 12 giant inflatables, some 14 feet tall. A sandy beach area with lounge chairs invites splashers to chill. Both areas are open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

See how many times you can orbit a spinning planet before splashing down in the 5-acre spring-fed lake at ACE Waterpark. It's at the center of ACE Adventure Resort in Oak Hill.

Follow the Falls

- **Blackwater and Elakala Falls at Blackwater Falls State Park, Davis**
  Two marvels in one park. Elakala is more off the beaten path, but well worth the trek.

- **Cathedral and Kanawha Falls in Fayette County**
  Cathedral is narrow and delicate, Kanawha wide and raging.

- **Whitaker Falls, Webster**
  Smaller falls surrounded by stunning greenery.

- **Falls of Hills Creek, Hillsboro**
  The first fall is wheelchair accessible.

on the green

Take a Swing

These world-class courses reward golfers with challenging greens, unspoiled views and (of course) bragging rights.

Stonewall Resort State Park

ROANOKE

The Arnold Palmer Signature Course spoils golfers with its peaceful setting and picturesque scenery, including a "ghost tree" on No. 17—a dead catalpa that dares you to hit over (or around) it. Young and beginning golfers like The King's Course, which overlays with The Palmer Course. Tees shorten the holes without shortchanging the experience.

Retreat to the idyllic Resort at Glade Springs to practice your swing on its championship layouts.

The Resort at Glade Springs

DANIELS

Here, golf-lovers can play on three high-ranking, regional courses with exciting elevation changes and Appalachian Mountain views: The Cobb Course, which has hosted the West Virginia Open, the Stonehaven Course and the Woodhaven Course.

The Greenbrier

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

Tee off at three world-class courses: The Old White, a PGA Tour stop of several years; The Greenbrier Course that has hosted the Ryder and Solheim cups; and The Meadows, with mountain vistas and dynamic green complexes.

Oglebay

WHEELING

With one course at the resort's Speidel Golf Club designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr., and a second course by Arnold Palmer, golf greatness is here. The 18-hole Crispin Course plays shorter, while still challenging all skill levels. Warm up on its adjacent driving range and nine-hole par-3 course.

Cacapon Resort State Park

BERKELEY SPRINGS

Ranked by *Golf Digest* as one of the nation's best designs (it's a mid-1970s work by Robert Trent Jones Sr.), the Cacapon course features three ponds, 73 pesky bunkers and a double green that's more than 100 yards wide. For a course in the foothills, it plays fairly wide open and flat. Make it a weekend: Stay at the park's new 124-room North Lodge.

Stretch your legs in the Cranberry Glades, one of the most unique ecosystems in West Virginia and home to uncommon plants and animals.

Flower Spotting

- **See cascading displays of the state flower along the 2-mile Rhododendron Trail at Valley Falls State Park in Fairmont.**
- **Cheerful yellow Marsh Marigolds, also known as cowslip, thrive in the wetlands of Canaan Valley Resort State Park in Davis.**

floral notes

In Bloom

Fragrant roses, fuss-free perennials, exuberant wildflowers. Communing with nature becomes a sensory experience at these well-appointed retreats.

Perennials

SUNSHINE FARM AND GARDENS, RENICK

If the mountains are calling, you'll get your dose of fresh air and eye candy at Sunshine Farm and Gardens, a whimsical high-altitude garden where nature meets retail. Both master gardeners and novices can enjoy thousands of hardy perennials, bulbs, trees and shrubs on offer at the nursery. Before you drive off, take a turn past the garden's lush plantings that spill onto rocky pathways.

Roses

RITTER PARK, HUNTINGTON

Forget about cut bouquets; roses are most romantic when they aren't confined to a vase. Get swept up in their beauty at Ritter Park, where you'll discover more than 3,000 fragrant, densely petaled blooms in a dizzying array of colors. Visit in late May to mid-June for the very best peak-season displays.

Wildflowers

CORE ARBORETUM, MORGANTOWN

Those seeking respite from downtown Morgantown's hustle and bustle needn't travel far to find it. Spread over 90 acres, this urban old-growth preserve along the Monongahela River has been owned and operated by West Virginia University since 1948—and it's free and open to the public. Grab your hiking shoes and Fido, if he's along for the ride, and explore the Core Arboretum's wooded trails. The area is home to more than 250 species of herbaceous plants and 180 types of birds. By mid-April, wildflowers like Virginia bluebells are ready for their close-ups, no filter needed.

Carnivorous Plants

CRANBERRY GLADES BOTANICAL AREA, HILLSBORO

Spend a few hours experiencing the southernmost location in North America where bogs are found. Thousands of years ago, melting glaciers gave way to these spongy, acidic wetlands where ancient carnivorous and insect-eating plants now thrive. A half-mile boardwalk cuts through the 750-acre stretch of land, affording visitors cool up-close views.

feel the rush

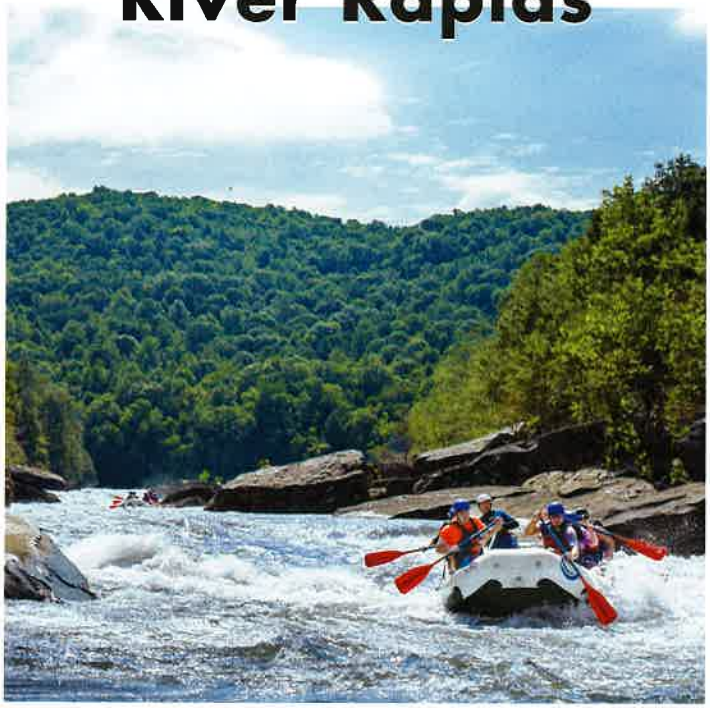
When you're vacationing in the Mountain State, you can indulge in as many outdoor adventures as your itinerary can handle. Zipline through spectacular stretches of the Allegheny Mountains, traverse rolling hills on an ATV, or rush down the New River at your own speed. Almost Heaven is full of thrills to make your heart race.

WRITER ***Shayla Martin***

THIS PAGE The Hatfield-McCoy Trails, known as Trails Heaven, snake through southern mountain scenery and plenty of ATV-friendly towns.

get soaked

River Rapids



TRADE HIKING POLES FOR OARS, AND BACKPACKS FOR LIFE PRESERVERS, THEN GET READY TO MAKE A SPLASH (OR A RIPPLE) AS YOU TAKE TO THE WATER.

Whitewater Rafting, New River Gorge National Park & Preserve

The Upper New River's long stretches of calm water is ideal for families and rookie rafters, while the Lower New, which boasts Class III, IV and V rapids, offers a wilder ride. Oak Hill's Ace Adventure Resort hosts summertime, family-friendly rafting trips on the Upper New for kids as young as 6; the Lower New River Gorge trip from River Expeditions races through roller-coaster waves to the famous New River Gorge Bridge. Join Adventures on the Gorge during Hawks Nest Dam release days to paddle the New River Dries, a 5-mile stretch of rapids that snakes through the Nuttall Sandstone cliffs. If time allows, a multiday rafting trip from Adventures on the Gorge resort in Lansing lets you explore multiple parts of the New River.

River Riders Family Adventure Resort, Harpers Ferry

Solo travel and whitewater kayaking are a match made in Almost Heaven. On a guide-assisted or self-guided excursion with River Riders Family Adventure Resort, you'll dip and swirl along the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers in an inflatable kayak. You'll navigate Class I, II and III rapids—so this option is best for confident swimmers. For a more leisurely adventure, whitewater tubing lets

you enjoy sites like historic Harpers Ferry and incredible rock formations in Maryland and Virginia. Upgrade to a deluxe vinyl tube for a backrest and cupholder. Cheers.

ABOVE At the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, Harpers Ferry is a scenic spot to go rafting, tubing and kayaking. Back on land, hiking and biking trails begin less than a mile from downtown.
LEFT Even if you're new to kayaking, guided trips make it easy to learn how to navigate whitewater rapids as you paddle along the New River Gorge.

River Fishing with The West Virginia Experience, Fayetteville

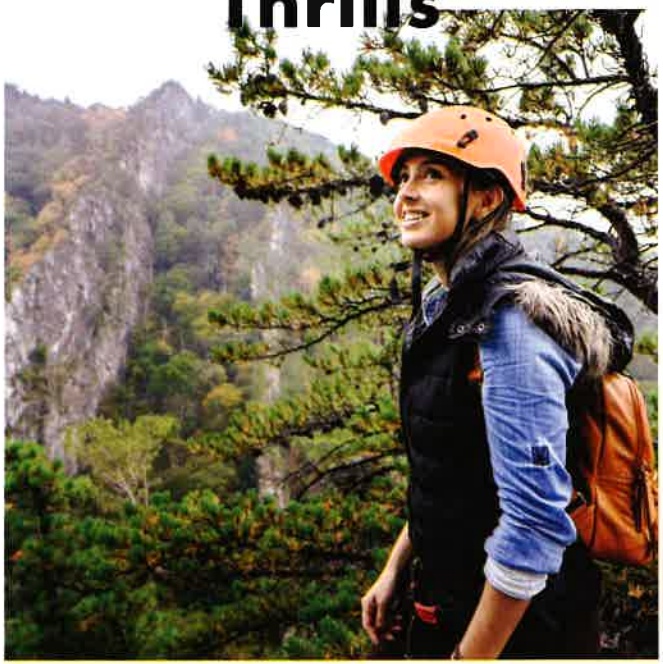
More than 20,000 miles of streams filled with tiger muskie, trout and largemouth bass make West Virginia an angler's paradise. Guides use their intimate knowledge of the waters to customize each trip, regardless of guests' fishing experience. A half-day trip includes four to six hours of guided fishing, equipment and refreshments; a full-day trip is eight to 10 hours of fishing and equipment, plus lunch. For a full experience in West Virginia fishing culture, try an overnight float fishing trip. All you'll need is a sleeping bag.

Hatfield and McCoy Airboat Tours, Matewan

These airboats sport supercharged, 550-horsepower engines and were built to cross Florida's Everglades. Glide along the scenic landscape that was the site of the 19th-century Hatfield and McCoy feud, zip under suspension bridges, and get an introduction to the state's wildlife.

soar high

Mountaintop Thrills



ASCEND ROCKY RIDGELINES, ZIP THROUGH THE SKY, AND HARNESS THAT MOUNTAIN MAGIC.

Hatfield-McCoy Trails

The best way to see West Virginia is on wheels (whether you choose two or four is up to you). The Hatfield-McCoy Trails are made of 1,000-plus miles of off-highway vehicle trails that cut through historic locations in southern West Virginia, such as Blair Mountain and Matewan, where most of the Hatfield-McCoy feuding took place. ATV, UTV and dirt-bike riders find routes to match their experience levels using a ranking system on the trails' website. All wind through ATV-friendly towns, so you can pull right up to a local restaurant or bed-and-breakfast to bunk down for the night on a multiday excursion.

OPPOSITE
During a guided climbing experience with NROCKS, you'll cross a 150-foot-high wooden plank bridge in the state's North Fork Valley.

Grand Vue Park, Moundsville

Feel your heart pound as you zoom through the crisp West Virginia air on a thrilling zipline or aerial course at Grand Vue Park overlooking the Ohio Valley. One of the adventure park's rope courses, the climbing tower, giant trampoline, rappel wall and mountain biking will also give you a rush. For a more relaxing getaway, head to the park's top-rated disc golf course, aquatic center and hiking trails. (They're great for bird-watching.) Book a room in the on-site Deluxe Cabins and Treetop Villas, where there's a hot tub on every deck. Or bring the extended family and stay in the multibedroom Eagle House.

Pipestem Peaks Zipline Tour, Pipestem Resort

The scenery alone is a reason to visit Pipestem Resort State Park, where a zipline network soars over the rushing river and lush, forest green canopies. The tour consists of nine ziplines, one cable bridge and one belay, with heights of up to 350 feet. It ends at Mountain Creek Lodge, where an aerial tram transports guests back to the top of the mountain. So sit back and enjoy the views of the Bluestone Gorge—it's surprisingly serene, even at 50 miles per hour!

Via Ferrata with NROCKS Outdoor Adventures, Circleville

Italian for "by way of iron," *via ferratas*—a permanent installation of steel rungs and cables for scaling rock face—were designed to transport troops in Italy during World War I. Today, via ferratas are a recreational activity for climbers, and the one at NROCKS is one of the few available to climb in the country. During the 3.5- to five-hour trek, you'll clamber over two towering rock fins, cross a suspension bridge and gain 1,085 feet in elevation.

Epic Hikes

Seneca Creek Trail

RIVERTON

This nearly 6-mile hike weaves through the Monongahela National Forest past waterfalls and open meadows. Navigate from here to the Huckleberry Trail to reach Spruce Knob, the highest point in West Virginia.

Endless Wall Trail

NEW HAVEN

The 2.4-mile trail traverses an eastern hemlock forest, crosses a footbridge then climbs to the rim of the New River Gorge National Park & Preserve. Continue to Diamond Point for mile-long views.

Loudoun Heights Trail to Split Rock

HARPERS FERRY

This moderate to strenuous hike offers multiple views of Harpers Ferry, the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, and the chance to briefly walk the Appalachian Trail.

For more hikes, visit WVTOURISM.COM

be well

HIT RESET

There's no doubt about it: An active lifestyle comes with a litany of health and mood-boosting benefits. These immersive experiences invite you to re-center, recharge and be well, your way.

WRITER ***Melissa Walker***

OPPOSITE
Photographers flock to Dolly Sods to capture its phenomenal display of mountain wildflowers and epic vistas.

SERENE SCENES Trail into the Monongahela National Forest to **Spruce Knob,** the state's highest peak, before sunrise to watch the sky become a kaleidoscope of colors. The observation tower provides panoramic mountain views as far as the eye can see. In eastern West Virginia, explore **Smoke Hole Canyon,** a 20-mile-long gorge whose rugged landscape is cut through by the Potomac River, on foot or by boat. Observe unique plant communities at **Dolly Sods Wilderness** in Monongahela National Forest. Some sections sport groves of one-sided trees, rocky plains and barren terrain, while other more lush areas bloom into a Technicolor dream as azaleas, mountain laurel, rhododendron and blueberries spring to life and cover the ground.

UNDO THE RIGORS OF HIKING WITH A SOAK IN NATURAL SULFUR OR A MINERAL SPRING. Reclaim much-needed serenity and energy through a massage or reflexology session. Meditate in a Himalayan salt cave. West Virginia's spa retreats are waiting to help you start the journey to a healthier you.

The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs beckons guests with its Southern hospitality and Gilded Age decor. Exuberant floral patterns and riotous splashes of color—hallmarks of iconic designer Dorothy Draper's signature style—envelope you upon entering the resort. At the spa, soak in the healing waters of the White Sulphur Springs, ease weary muscles with a massage, and hydrate skin with a botanical mud wrap.

Set inside an earth-friendly underground human-made cave, **The Salt Cave and Spa** in Lewisburg is a quiet escape for relaxation and meditation. The spa is known for its halotherapy treatment that

OPPOSITE
Soak up mineral waters in Berkeley Springs State Park and find peace at The Salt Cave and Spa in Lewisburg.
THIS PAGE
Journey to simpler times at Capon Springs and Farms and commune with nature by exploring the 4,700-acre property.

reduces inflammation and opens air passageways. In other words, you'll leave breathing a little easier.

Just a two-hour drive from the bustle of D.C. sits **Capon Springs and Farms,** an all-inclusive 19th-century resort. Step inside the Hygeia Bath House and Spa and take a hot bath in healing spring water, or give your hands and feet extra TLC with a reflexology session.

In Berkeley Springs, **The Roman Bath House** was built in the early 1800s for gentlemen only and is one of the oldest structures in the state park. Its doors were later opened to women, and now families can plunge in the bath's therapeutic waters, which are sourced from local mineral springs and renowned for their healing abilities.

At the annual **Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting** event, connoisseurs sample more than 100 waters from across the country and around the globe. It's the world's largest water-tasting competition.

You can be as leisurely as you want at **The Resort at Glade Springs** in Daniels: Walk through the manicured grounds to enjoy natural beauty and wildlife, or grab the clubs and head to the course for unlimited golf. This full-service mountain escape has ample recreational activities and outdoor adventures for all ages but also caters to those who want fine dining and a little rest and relaxation at its Spa Orange.

THIS PAGE Near the geographic center of the state, Summersville Lake is known for its deep, crystal-clear waters. Paddle around to explore all of its nooks and crannies.

STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

Meander along the calmer parts of the Cheat River, and you'll quickly take on a new perspective. Bring the binoculars to zero in on your surroundings as you spot bald eagles, Canada geese and deer from a stand-up paddleboard at **Blackwater Outdoor Adventures.**

Paddle into unspoiled coves and other quiet places that are inaccessible to boaters at **Summersville Lake Retreat.** Perfect your posture, improve your balance and strengthen your core at the same time.

Bring the whole family along to spend the day in the sun on a YOLO Hammerhead Paddleboard at **Sutton Lake Marina,** a clear, 1,500-acre lake just 3 miles off Interstate-79 in Sutton. Paddlers of all ages and skills can learn the basics of paddleboarding from a local pro and be out on the water in no time.

YOGA Unite with nature as you practice yoga with verdant views of Appalachian hills and valleys at **Snowshoe Mountain Resort.** Energy medicine and hatha vinyasa flow classes for all experience levels convene at this resort, where adventurous guests can also ski or hike 300 miles of glorious mountain trails.

Defy gravity and take your practice to new heights during an aerial yoga class at **Yoga Power** in Charleston. Beginner, intermediate and advanced practitioners will suspend free in soft silk hammocks while exploring inversions and floating and fluid movements that create space in the body while being gentle on joints.

Even the youngest of yogis can reap the mindfulness benefits of yoga—plus enjoy songs, stories and games through the children's yoga classes at the **Gateway Children's Garden at Ambrose Park** in Martinsburg. During a strength-building class, a certified Kidding Around Yoga teacher shares mindful breathing and age-appropriate stress management techniques in a playful way that gives kids the giggles.

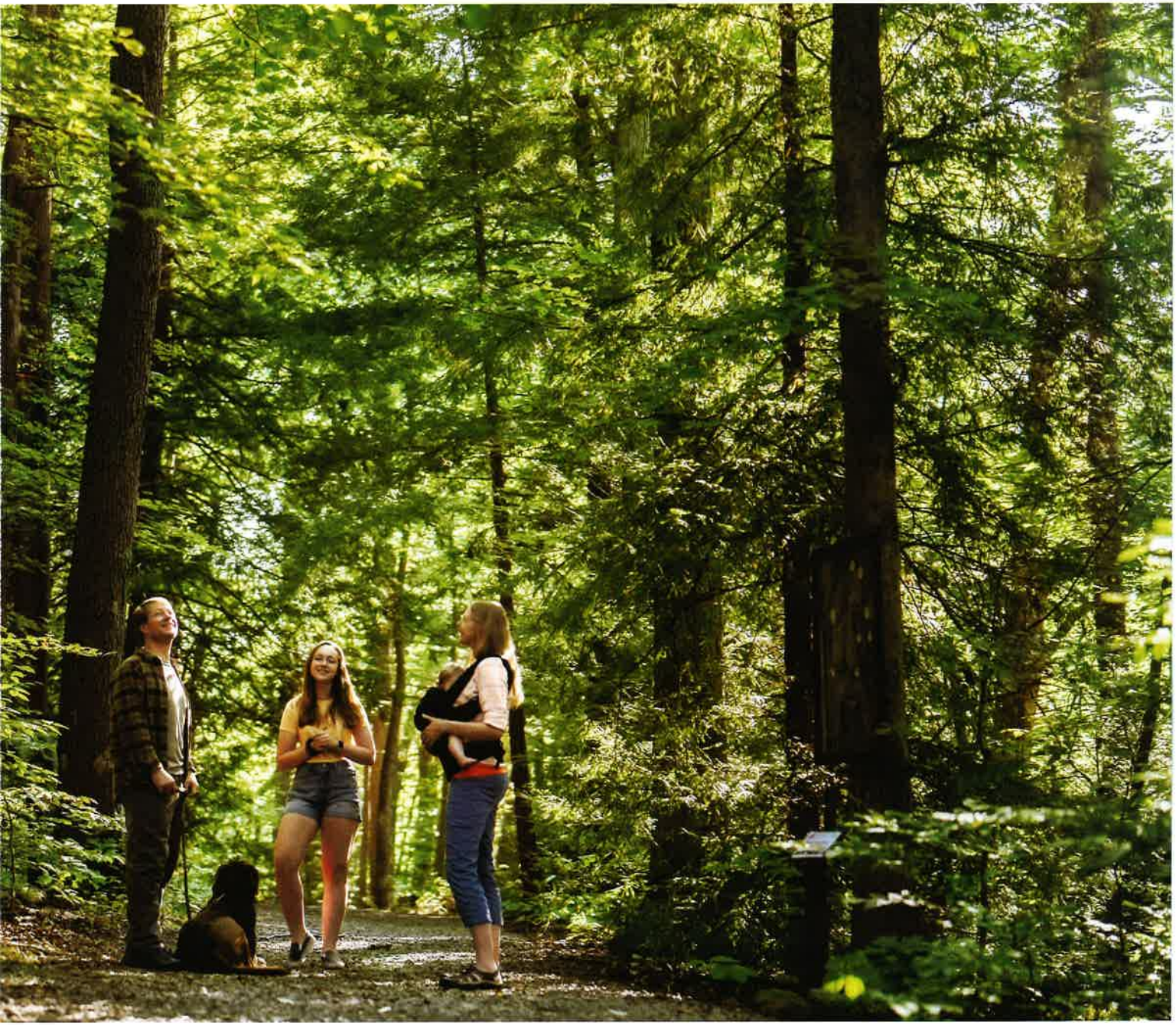
THIS PAGE
Rise with the sun and leave your yoga practice feeling enlightened. Opportunities await to bring balance to mind and body in the Mountain State.

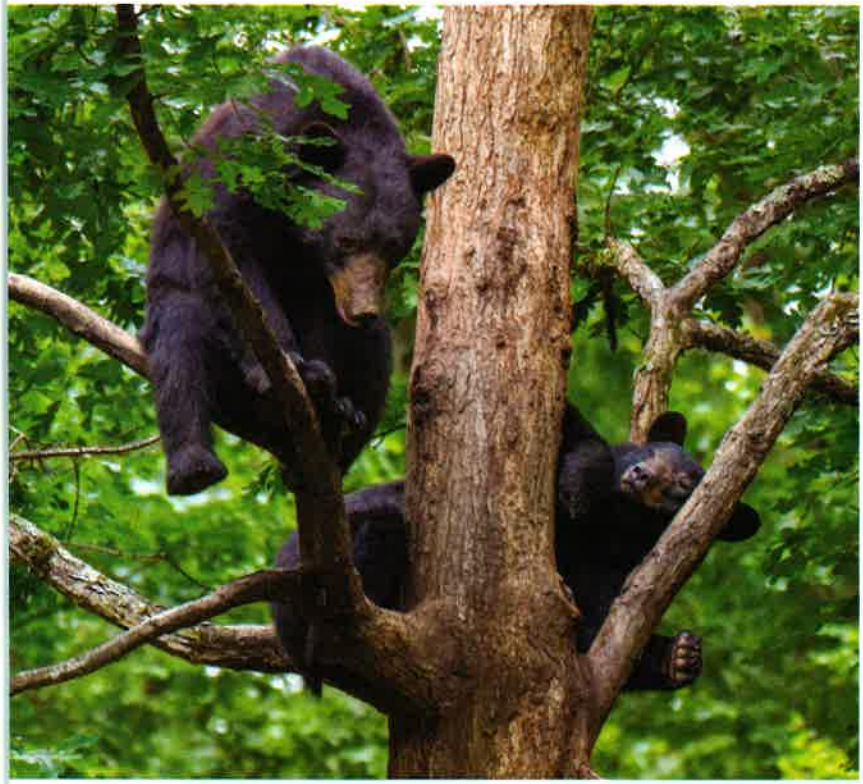
HEALING NATURE

Set on 85 acres, the **West Virginia Botanic Garden** is actually comprised of nine gardens with distinct themes, each with a variety of perennials and annuals whose seasonal blooms color the landscape. Search the gardens' magical elements as you amble along—spot the old man's face carved into a fallen tree, seek sanctuary in the meditation garden, or rest in one of the red hammocks in the Hammock Haven.

The **Lost World Caverns** were once home to dinosaurs (and even a prehistoric cave bear), and today's experience is equally awe-inspiring. Marvel at its columns of white calcite and otherworldly rock formations, like the 30-ton compound stalactite known as the Snowy Chandelier (one of the nation's largest). Bring a light jacket and wear good shoes for the self-guided tour. Explorers can also mine for gemstones, arrowheads, minerals and ancient fossils.

OPPOSITE
More than 4 miles of forested trails make the West Virginia Botanic Garden feel like a remote getaway.





OPPOSITE
Hanging Rock Observatory was first used as a fire tower. Today, it's a lookout spot for migrating eagles, falcons and more.

THIS PAGE
Observe the official state animal, the black bear, in its reclaimed habitat.

Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory

Hike to the old fire tower in Monroe County to see vultures, osprey, eagles, hawks and other birds of prey soar overhead on their southern migration path. Bring the binoculars.

Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Visit waterfowl, mammals, insects and freshwater mussels that have returned to the area through a restoration project of 22 islands along the upper Ohio River.

West Virginia State Wildlife Center

Return to a time before the state's large mammals were overhunted or forced away due to habitat loss. See elk, bison, wolves and mountain lions in their native environment in French Creek.

Chief Logan State Park Elk Tours

In Logan, witness the comeback of elk after a 100-year absence. A park naturalist will lead tour-goers on a hike through the free-roaming elk space. Listen for the bull's bugle.

Hovatter's Wildlife Zoo

Become part of the menagerie of native and exotic animals that includes tigers, leopards, lemurs and a bear. See, hear and feed some of the mammals while visiting this exciting zoo in Kingwood.

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Learn how this patchwork of wetlands in Davis reduces downstream flooding and provides refuge to dragonflies, damselflies and birds that have declining nesting habitats.

Bolar Lookout Tower

PIPESTEM

Climb to the top of this tower in Pipestem Resort State Park to see elevated views of epic, star-studded skies on full display.

views

West Virginia's unspoiled beauty becomes even more enchanting with a little star power. Head to the open wilderness for prime night sky views.

WRITER *Allison Vancura*

Blackwater Falls State Park

DAVIS

Come for the park's iconic waterfalls and hiking trails, stay for incredible stargazing at night. (Better yet: camp!) Each August, visitors can see big, bright streaks of light zooming by during the Perseids meteor shower.

MCDONOUGH WILDLIFE REFUGE, VIENNA

fall + winter

Reset your mood with a change of scenery. Scout fiery foliage, savor Appalachian flavors, and immerse yourself in the season's bounty.

rich history

Glass Menagerie

Though each of these colorful collections has a distinctive heritage, they all share a common foundation of old-school craftsmanship.

Oglebay Institute Glass Museum **WHEELING**

See more than 3,000 examples of vintage glass, including cut lead crystal, Victorian art glass, peachblow glass, pattern and Depression glass, and Northwood carnival glass, plus the largest piece of cut lead crystal ever made: the Sweeney Punch Bowl, standing 5 feet tall and weighing 225 pounds. Watch live demos and make your own glass treasure at a walk-in workshop.

West Virginia Glass Outlet **MARTINSBURG**

Find something special for holiday celebrations among the more than 80 styles of handblown wine glasses and barware. The store carries a large selection of new and vintage glass from more than 25 factories and studios, such as Blenko Art Glass, Fenton Glass and Mosser Glass. It's a great place to buy Christmas gifts, too—the store boxes items for easy wrapping.

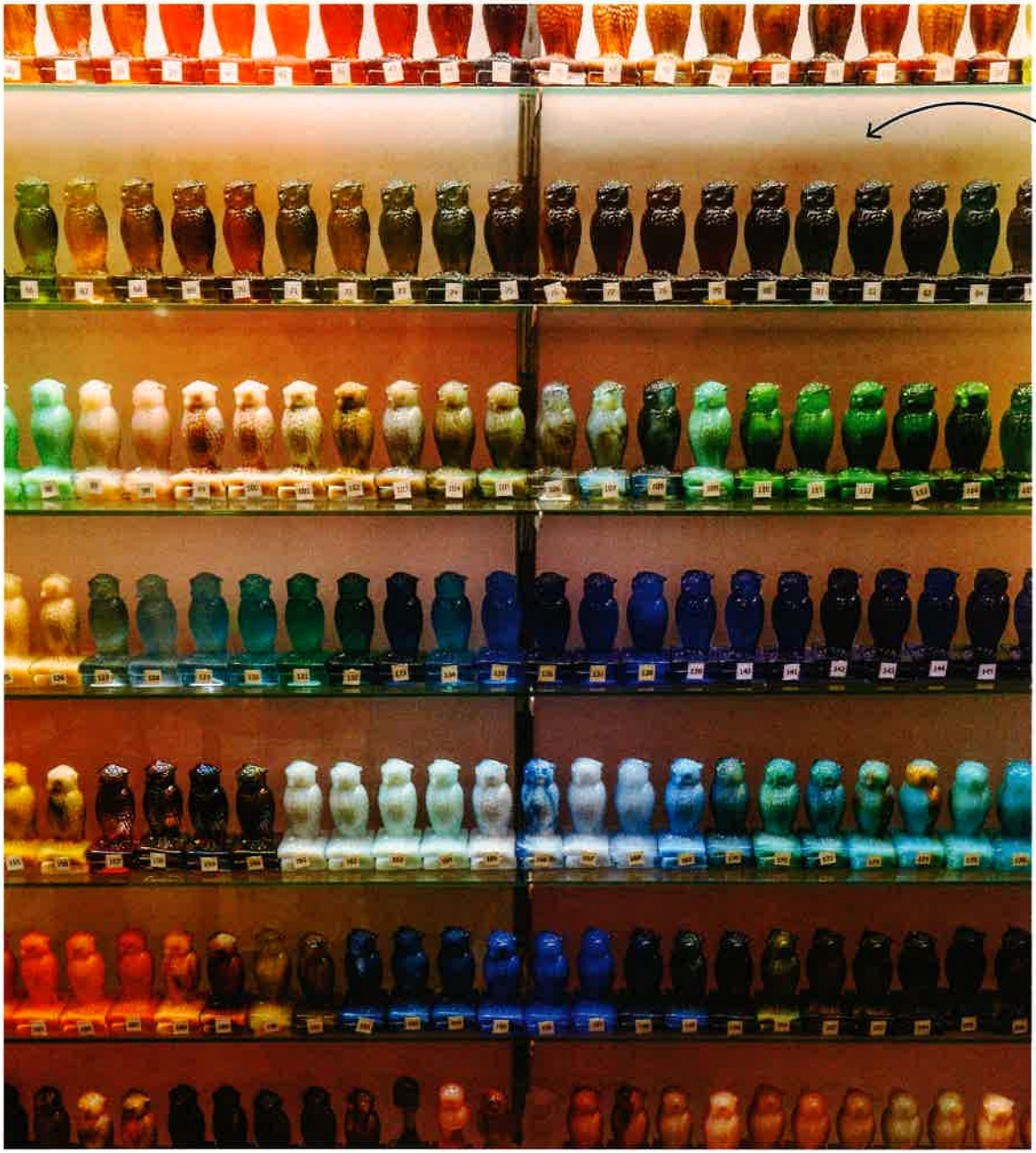
Watch skilled makers swirl and shape glass into mesmerizing works of art during demonstrations at Appalachian Glass.

Appalachian Glass **WESTON**

Three generations of glassmakers keep the tradition alive at this working studio that produces mouth-blown, handcrafted glass. Visitors can watch a demonstration of the technique from a special viewing area. Look for friendship balls (5- to 6-inch multicolor globes exchanged by friends) and witch's balls, which early settlers hung to ward off spells.

Fast Facts

- The state's high volume of silica sand is ideal for glass manufacturing.
- Blenko Glass Company in Milton turns 100 this year.
- In Beckley, Tamarak has been an arts hub for more than 20 years.



Weston's Museum of American Glass houses works made between 1900 and 1940, and designs range from utilitarian to decorative.

West Virginia American Art Glass

WESTON

You can learn a lot about glassmaking at this small shop, whose friendly owner, Scott Meyer, considers himself part artist, part chemist and part mad scientist. Meyer uses old-world techniques to create modern everyday pieces, like vases and paperweights. He'll talk you through the process as he works—and may even let you help.

cozy stays

Quaint Escapes

Whether for a long weekend or a weeklong getaway, these unique destinations bring comfort and joy.

Buckhannon

Each day brings a different artist to work at **Artistry on Main,** a nonprofit co-op featuring textiles, jewelry, handblown glass, paintings and more. Dine on dishes starring local ingredients at **Fish Hawk Acres,** a 40-acre farm with a market and cafe. Baked goods include scones, tarts and pepperoni rolls. Theater in the round? How about theater in the ground? **Lascaux Micro-Theater** shows indie films, documentaries and foreign flicks in an intimate underground setting just off Main Street. Find a homey atmosphere and updated rooms at **The Bicentennial Inn,** close to Main Street attractions.

Elkins

Be wowed by a waterfall, an S-curve tunnel, a high bridge and mountain views aboard the **New Tygart Flyer,** a vintage diesel-powered passenger train that chugs through the wilderness. **Vintage Restaurant** offers casual fine dining in a warm atmosphere—stone, dark wood, comfy booths and a fireplace. Indulge in steaks, seafood, pizza and a deep wine list. At the **Gandy Dancer Theatre,** musicians and dancers pour passion into Branson-style productions, like tributes to Elvis, Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton. Elvis didn't build **Graceland Inn,** a restored Victorian mansion on the Davis and Elkins College campus. With vintage-look rooms and 20-mile mountain views, it's no heartbreak hotel.

Out and About

- **Catch live horse racing at the Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races.**
- **Cross peaks and valleys with Mountain Rail Adventures in Elkins.**
- **Look for the dramatic Alum Cave overhang in Audra State Park northeast of Buckhannon.**

Take the night off from cooking at home and make plans for a romantic meal at the Hillbrook Inn's Redbook Restaurant.

Charles Town

Tour aptly named **Happy Retreat,** the Federal- and Greek Revival-style home of Charles Washington, city founder and brother of our first president, George. Each December, the Christmas Open House is especially merry and bright. Speaking of George Washington, he once owned the land that's now **Cool Spring Nature Preserve,** a birding hot spot on 63 acres of forest, meadow and marsh. **Sumittra Thai Cuisine** is a bird hot spot too: Duck- and chicken-based dishes are among the spicy favorites served in small, shareable courses. Gourmet meals and a relaxing spa highlight stays at **Hillbrook Inn,** where 19 guest suites spread over five buildings offer modern comforts in a historic setting.

spooky sites

Favorite Haunts

Test your nerve in these spine-tingling settings where spirits like to make themselves known.

Visitors have reported—and photographed—a "shadow man" in this Gothic-style state prison.

Shepherdstown Mystery Walks SHEPHERDSTOWN

Apparently, some residents left this world but never left town. Meet them on a candlelight stroll through West Virginia's oldest city, led by a costumed guide. At haunted and historic locations, hear about eerie eras: early settler days, the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, Civil War, and the building of the C&O Canal. And meet Cecil, the tour's feline mascot.

West Virginia Penitentiary MOUNDSVILLE

Do time without doing the crime at this old state prison, built in 1866 and closed in 1995. The imposing castle-like structure hosts day tours, paranormal investigations, escape rooms and a haunted house. The overnight option starts with a 90-minute guided tour, then you're "free" to visit the Sugar Shack, North Hall, Boiler Room and psych ward.

Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum WESTON

Apparition sightings, unexplainable voices and sounds draw ghost hunters to this National Historic Landmark that served as a sanctuary for the mentally ill in the mid-1800s. It's the largest hand-cut stone masonry building in North America (and the world's second-largest, after the Kremlin). Paranormal tours are available by day or by night, and overnight.

Lake Shawnee Abandoned Amusement Park ROCK

Closed in 1966 after fatal accidents, it's been called one of the world's most haunted places. The tragic history dates to the late 1700s, when a family of settlers had a deadly conflict with Native Americans. Tour the rusted remains of rides, said to be built atop an ancient Native burial ground. October's nighttime Dark Carnival ups the chill factor, including a chance to camp out, if you dare.

hands-on fun

Museum Marvels

Learning is more fun when you can dive into history, raise your art IQ and let your imagination run wild.

The Huntington Museum of Art isn't just a traditional gallery: It's also the site of West Virginia's only plant conservatory, which opened in 1996 and boasts an impressive 100 varieties of orchids.

Huntington Museum of Art HUNTINGTON

With a permanent collection of more than 16,000 objects and 10 exhibition spaces, the HMA surprises for a museum its size—and there's so much more than pictures on walls. Check out the state's only tropical and subtropical plant conservatory, a coral reef aquarium, outdoor sculpture courts, hiking trails, and a paved sensory trail for the visually impaired.

West Virginia Independence Hall WHEELING

Originally known as the Wheeling Custom House, this building—completed at the start of the Civil War—gave birth to the state. It hosted heated political discussions about slavery and other divisive issues and was the site of constitutional conventions that led to statehood in 1863. Take a self-guided tour of the rooms where it happened, all of them authentically restored.

Spark! Imagination and Science Center MORGANTOWN

Kids from 6 months to age 10 can wrap their hands around science and the arts at this spot for interactive adventures. They'll explore dinosaurs, nanoscience, engineering, the solar system, weather and wellness, plus play with puppets and dress-up. The newest (and bluest) exhibit, *Cam's Imagination Playground,* promotes creativity, collaboration and problem-solving.

West Virginia State Museum at The Culture Center CHARLESTON

Walk through the state's history from the very start—when it was a prehistoric coal forest—to the present day. This is a chronological, interactive experience with more than 24 galleries covering pivotal eras and topics like frontier life, coal mining and glassmaking. Further expand your world with the Clay Center's immersive art and science exhibits and state-of-the-art planetarium.

around town

Walking Tours

Two reasons to embrace walking tours this year: You can move at your own speed and keep as much distance as you like.

Ghost Tours

HARPERS FERRY

Eerie stories await on a two-hour walk around historic Lower Town, a neighborhood said to be haunted by its Civil War-Era legacy of death and destruction. Even if you don't believe in the ghost stuff, you'll learn more about this area's fascinating history. And though spooky at times, the tour is fine for most young kids.

The Greenbrier Bunker Tour

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

You'll find plenty of bunkers on this resort's golf courses, but none as deep as The Bunker, a once top-secret emergency fallout shelter built deep below the ground for the government during the Cold War. Designed to hold Congress, this legendary site includes dormitories, decontamination chambers, a power plant, water supply, medical facilities, a cafeteria and communication systems.

State Capitol

CHARLESTON

Marvel at marble walls and other grand details at the renovated building designed by architect Cass Gilbert. Opened in 1932, it features the highest state capitol dome in the U.S. and an East Wing chamber that served as a model for the larger version in the U.S. Supreme Court building. Weekday tours start every half hour in the first floor rotunda.

Victorian Grandeur

PARKERSBURG

If walls could talk, every building would tell a story on this self-guided tour. Fortunately, you can read the plaques on the historic structures in the Julia-Ann Square Historic District, where you'll find some of the greatest Victorian architecture in West Virginia. See the ornate and stately homes of influential figures from the state's early history—many homes date back to the 1840s.

SETI and High Tech Tours

GREEN BANK

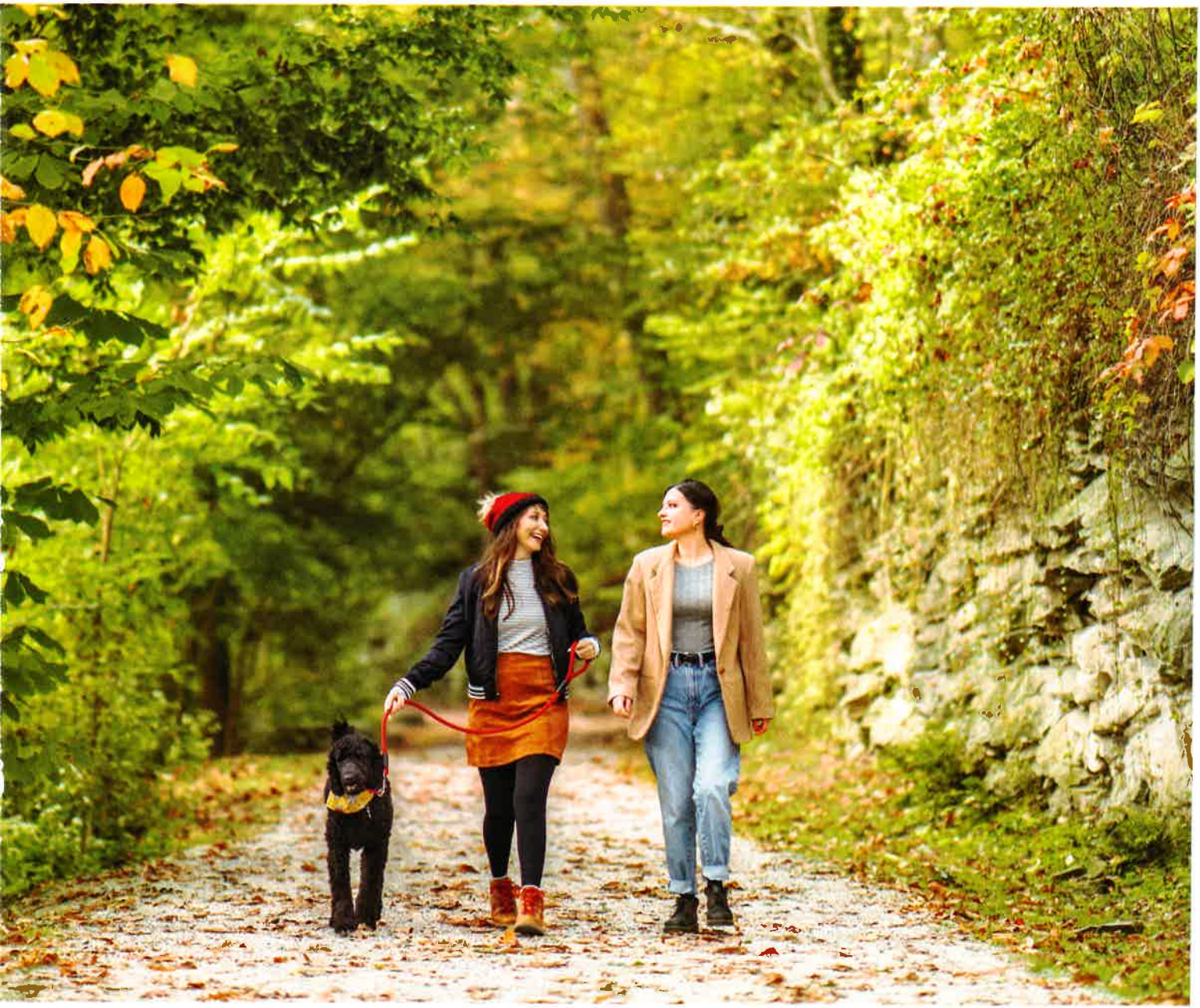
Go behind the scenes in the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) with access to a historic telescope and a chat with a radio astronomer. On the High Tech Tour, look inside receivers that collect the universe's faintest signals and see the inner workings of a world-class radio astronomy site. The whole area is a quiet zone for electronic devices, so phones off.

Annual Holiday Historic Homes Tour

FAIRMONT

The mood is merry when the area's most beautiful and historic homes—most of them decorated for the holidays—open their doors to public tours on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Treats and live music in some of the homes are traditions of the event, which is hosted by the Marion County Historical Society.

Look for traces of Charleston's past—like old stone walls and historical monuments—along the 0.65-mile Carriage Trail.



take a tipple

Craft Brews and Spirits

Moonshine has deep roots in Appalachia, but a booming craft scene means local ingredients show up in new, unexpected ways.

Even the thick stumps serving as high-top tables inside Stumptown Ales nod to the rugged history of Davis.

Stumptown Ales DAVIS
Get hip to their hop-centric approach—IPAs rule the taps here, whether it's a smooth-drinking session ale like Easy Blonde or a mind-altering triple like Big Boy Pants. The brewery's name honors the town's timbering heritage: Back in the day, you could hop through town on stumps. New-growth trees now tower over Davis, but this hoppy spot stays true to its roots.

Still Hollow Spirits **HARMAN**

Bloody Butcher corn (an heirloom variety named for its reddish-brown color) and mountain flavors such as ginseng, cranberries, elderberries, mint, black walnuts and Chaga mushrooms power the spirits from this family-owned, farm-based distillery high in the Allegheny Mountains. Sample traditional mountain-style whiskeys and botanical infusions amid the beauty of the Dry Fork River valley.

Weathered Ground Brewery **GHENT**

When owners Sam and Aryn Fonda opened this barn-like brewery on 30 acres of farmland, beer-lovers hitched up their wagons to reap the harvest. The brewery specializes in farmhouse ales that reflect local flavors, including ingredients grown on-site. Try the Scrappy Rye Pale Ale, brewed with local barley and rye.

Mountain State Distillery **CHARLESTON**

Stop by this micro-distillery in downtown's historic district for signature Southern Blend Whiskey in original, vanilla and cinnamon flavors. Or catch lightning in a bottle: White Lightning, an unaged corn whiskey made from local corn, sugar, barley and yeast. It's authentic moonshine like they used to make in the hills.

Morgantown Brewing Company **MORGANTOWN**

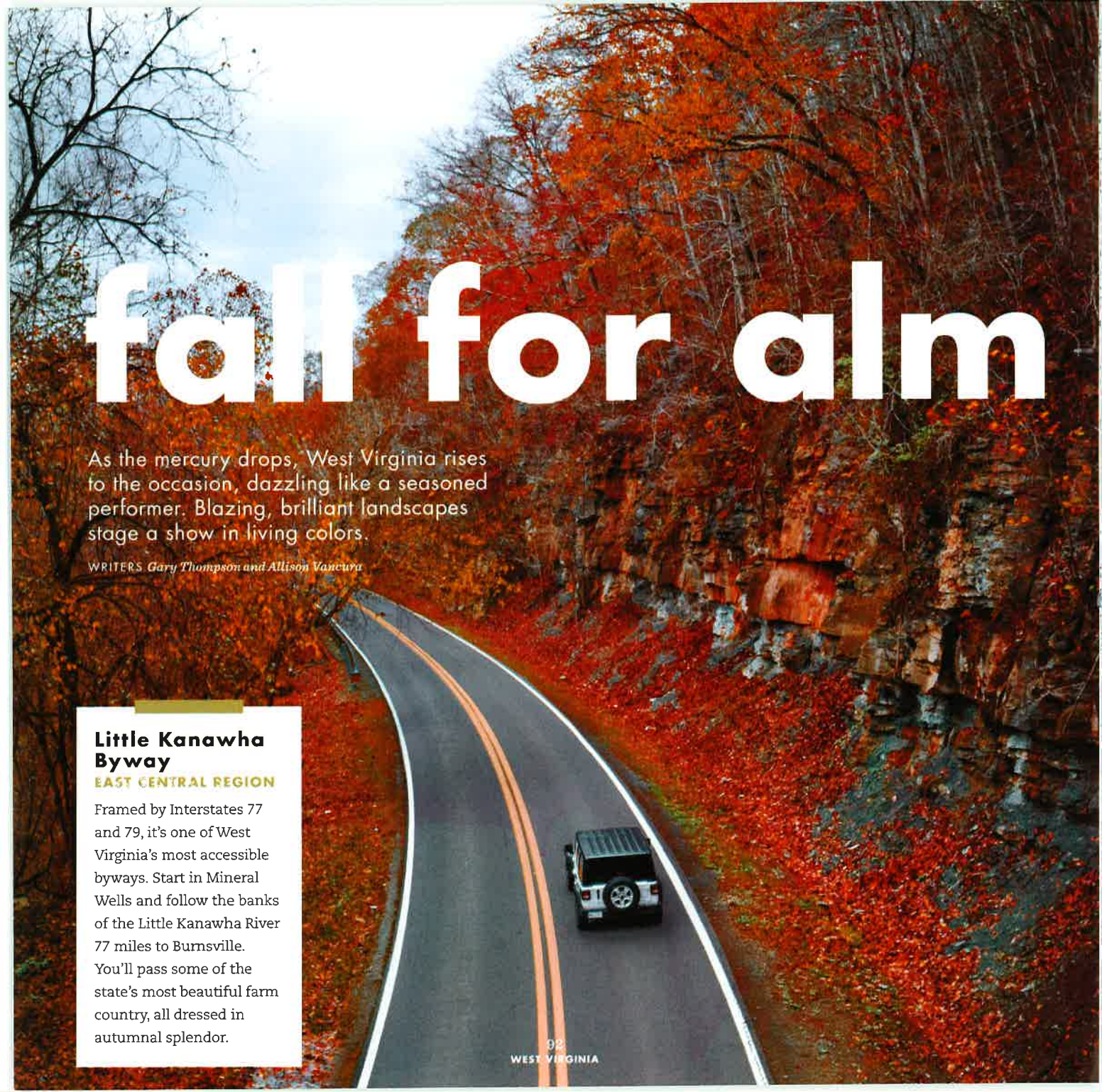
Exotic soured fruit ales, mega-hoppy hazy IPAs and traditional pub beers satisfy a spectrum of tastes at West Virginia's oldest operating brewery. From downtown's historic waterfront, the brewery offers in-house pours, growler fills and build-your-own can packs to go, plus a food menu built around smash-style steak burgers.

Find more breweries and distilleries at **WVTOURISM.COM**

fall for alm

As the mercury drops, West Virginia rises to the occasion, dazzling like a seasoned performer. Blazing, brilliant landscapes stage a show in living colors.

WRITERS *Gary Thompson and Allison Vancura*



Little Kanawha Byway

EAST CENTRAL REGION

Framed by Interstates 77 and 79, it's one of West Virginia's most accessible byways. Start in Mineral Wells and follow the banks of the Little Kanawha River 77 miles to Burnsville. You'll pass some of the state's most beautiful farm country, all dressed in autumnal splendor.

Gauley River

NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Gauley Season happens every year in September and October, when scheduled dam releases drain Summersville Lake, creating thrilling Class V whitewater rafting on the river. Even without the bonus rapids, the Gauley River canyon is a lush and verdant paradise to behold.

High Rocks Trail

HILLSBORO

Time seems to stand still at this overlook high above the Stamping Creek watershed, where the landscape ripples with fiery wildflowers, trees and shrubs that dazzle. Hike the 1.5-mile trail to admire the unobstructed mountain views from the top.

Hatfield-McCoy Trail System

MULTIPLE TOWNS

Ride a dirt bike or ATV through more than 800 miles of twisting trails by day; camp or stay in a rustic cottage by night. This expansive system connects to ATV-friendly towns and is open 365 days each year.

North Bend State Park

CAIRO

Mother Nature saves some of her most spectacular Appalachian views for the changing seasons, ushering locals and visitors outside. Stretching nearly 72 miles, the pastoral North Bend Rail Trail follows the rail corridor constructed in the mid-1800s through tunnels, bridges and parks.

Glade Creek Grist Mill

BABCOCK STATE PARK

In Fayette County, just 20 miles from the New River Gorge Bridge, Babcock State Park gets high marks for its picturesque vignettes. Perhaps the most snapped view is the still-operational Glade Creek Grist Mill.

Sandstone Falls

SANDSTONE

When the New River cut through the Appalachian Mountains to form the New River Gorge, it created magnificent overlooks, like Sandstone. This largest waterfall on the New River drops 20 feet and spans 1,500 feet in width, and it is divided by little islands.

Coopers Rock State Forest

BRUCETON MILLS

Less than 15 miles from Morgantown, the overlook at the Cheat River Gorge yields incredible dividends—especially in fall, when the creek-lined valleys explode into a riotous display of bright red-oranges, mottled greens and golds.

THIS SPREAD
Ingredients featured on the Appalachia Kitchen's farm-to-table menu, like its meats and produce, are sourced from local farms.

appalachian table

WRITER *Kelsey Ogletree*

Farm-to-table cuisine, comfort food and favorites not found anywhere else—like the famous pepperoni roll—await hungry visitors to West Virginia, any time of year.

Appalachia Kitchen

SNOWSHOE

Snowshoe Mountain's diverse offerings don't stop at the slopes. Just a five-minute walk from Snowshoe Village, hungry guests can head to the Appalachia Kitchen for elevated regional fare crafted by Chef Ed Shuttleworth (like hickory-smoked trout, crab cakes with caper-dill rémoulade, and venison meatloaf served with roasted garlic mashed potatoes and a red wine demi-glacé). Another bonus: The restaurant's location at the top floor of the Corduroy Lodge affords diners beautiful sunset views of the Allegheny Mountains.

THE FOOD WE EAT TELLS A POWERFUL STORY.

A story of the land that existed before us. A testament to generations of farmers laboring in fields, harvesting crops and raising animals. A celebration of our heritage. And here in Almost Heaven, the food we eat nourishes our hearts and our souls. Some of the country's finest chefs and dining options can be found in every corner of the state, translating the comforting flavors of Appalachia into mouthwatering dishes you'll find excuses to travel for. Ahead, we profile a handful of these tastemakers, and famous ingredients and must-try meals West Virginia is known for (including the beloved pepperoni roll). We've even sourced first lady Cathy Justice's award-winning cornbread recipe, so you can have a taste of Almost Heaven wherever you call home.

Matt Welsch

Vagabond Kitchen

As chef-owner of Vagabond Kitchen, Matt Welsch says exploring has been the theme of his life. It was his traveling nature—including stints in Europe, the Dominican Republic, Japan and throughout the United States—that led him to cooking. He discovered the culture of a destination by working in kitchens, and he wanted to bring that back to his home state. In 2014, he opened Vagabond Kitchen in Wheeling, with a menu he describes as "Appalachian comfort food with some twists." (Think pepperoni rolls with Mediterranean relish, or the Blackout Burger with Havarti and a balsamic reduction.) A farm-to-table man, he sources local ingredients like ramps, buckwheat and pawpaws.

QUICK FACTS

Big Wheels

With the Vagabond Chef Project, Matt Welsch put 13,000 miles on his motorcycle in 2013 riding to restaurants all over the country.

Fitting In

The kitchen has been the one place he's always felt at home, alongside good people working hard, who believe in food and what it can do.

Comfort Food

"It's the foundation upon which we can offer a gateway to diverse and interesting flavors that may be a little intimidating otherwise."

Bavarian Inn
SHEPHERDSTOWN

> “I bang the local drum as much as possible. That’s a very Appalachian thing—to support your neighbors.”
>
> **MATT WELSCH**

ABOVE
For over 40 years, diners have flocked to the Bavarian Inn to enjoy its cozy atmosphere and authentic German delicacies.

A lot has changed in the world since 1977, when a Munich native and his wife founded this European-inspired spot in Shepherdstown. One thing that hasn’t changed (much) is the food: German dishes such as *sauerbraten* (marinated beef) and *Jaegerschnitzel* (veal steak with mushroom and Cognac cream) are must-tries for any newcomer. The latest addition to the combination restaurant and 72-room hotel—which has a stunning infinity pool overlooking the Potomac—is a brewery and casual dining experience. Bavarian Brothers Brewing serves up a dozen beers made on-site, an impressive list of German and Austrian wines, and indulgences like crab-stuffed pretzels or Hereford beef burgers topped with Gruyère. Don’t miss the firepit and s'mores kits after dinner. Prost!

Paul Smith

1010 Bridge

QUICK FACTS

Food Philosophy

Let the food speak for itself. "Buy the most seasonal and local ingredients you can and do as little to them as possible."

Off the Clock, On the Town

In what little free time he has, Paul Smith loves dining at Chow Thai and Sam's Uptown Cafe in Charleston.

Menus at three of Charleston's newest restaurants—all different as can be—each hail from the kitchen wizardry of local celebrity chef and Charleston native Paul Smith. Over the summer of 2020, Smith helped open downtown's 1010 Bridge (Appalachian cuisine with Low Country influence) and The Pitch Sports Bar and Grill, inside Shawnee Sports Complex in Dunbar (with fare like a fried bologna sandwich to pair with all-West Virginia beer on tap). Earlier in 2020, Smith worked on the "blended table" project for Barkadas—a Filipino-American restaurant in downtown Charleston that serves adobos alongside cheeseburgers and wings.

Jim's Steak and Spaghetti House

HUNTINGTON

Few restaurants can say they've been open for eight decades—but this family favorite in Huntington has existed as a local staple (in the same location, no less!) for the past 83 years. In 2019, it was named the America's Classics winner for the Southeast region by the James Beard Foundation. Yet it's the simple things for which Jim's is known, like its spaghetti. Food Network has also featured Jim's fish sandwich, made with Icelandic haddock and served with homemade tartar sauce and coleslaw. Their strawberry pie is served only one week in May: In 2019, they sold 11,000 slices, so plan ahead.

Mike Costello + Amy Dawson

Lost Creek Farm

> “I’m trying to change the way people think about food from West Virginia.”
>
> **MIKE COSTELLO**

QUICK FACTS

Voice Over
Costello co-hosts *The Pickle Shelf Radio Hour*, a podcast on the foods of cultural and ethnic communities across West Virginia.

Fresh Tales
Diners are moved by stories of food evolution, like the West Virginian tradition of chowchow, a pickle relish made from scraps of the fall harvest.

Life Partners
“Amy and I run this business as a partnership in every way. As a true farm-to-table business, she’s our farm manager, and I’m the chef.”

Pride in the heritage and value of what’s harvested and cooked in West Virginia beams from chef Mike Costello and baker Amy Dawson. This husband and wife team lives and works on a Harrison County farm that has been in Dawson’s family for six generations, where they grow dozens of Appalachian heirloom crops and raise chickens and meat rabbits. “When you come to a dinner at Lost Creek Farm, you’re not just served a meal; you’re served a story about who made that meal possible—not just those in the kitchen, but those who stewarded the seeds or perfected the recipe,” Costello says. Salt-rising bread, the pioneers’ no-yeast work-around, has become a specialty. In 2018, on a season premiere of *Parts Unknown*, they served corn chowder, fried rabbit with chowchow and pawpaw ice cream to Anthony Bourdain.

The Dish

YOUR VISIT TO WEST VIRGINIA WON'T BE COMPLETE UNTIL YOU TRY AT LEAST ONE OF THESE BELOVED LOCAL SPECIALTIES.

Hot Dog Chili

No one knows exactly how the century-old family recipe came to be, but this ultimate comfort food from The Custard Stand in Webster Springs is a perfect topper for the cookout favorite, as well as for fries, chili mac and walking tacos.

Pepperoni Rolls

A West Virginia original, these were first introduced in the 1920s by an Italian immigrant coal miner, who opened Country Club Bakery in Fairmont. The restaurant's fresh, warm "pep rolls"—spicy pepperoni baked inside soft white bread—are a perfectly packable meal or a hearty snack.

Ramps

Think of a strong onion flavor with a hint of woodsy garlic: That's the vegetable known as a ramp, grown here in spring. The Wild Ramp market in Huntington hosts Stink Fest each April, with ramp mac 'n' cheese, ramp ice cream and more.

Pawpaw Ice Cream

If a banana and a pineapple had a baby, it would be a pawpaw. This unusual tropical fruit, which is harvested in the fall, goes into a limited-edition flavor of Ellen's Homemade Ice Cream in Charleston. Grab a cone or pick up a pint to take home.

Mushrooms

Foraging is a way of life at Hernshaw Farms in Hernshaw. The company grows and harvests mushrooms, then uses the spent blocks to turn old mine land into farmland. Try the dried lion's mane mushrooms rehydrated with butter to top steak or tossed into mashed potatoes.

Biscuits

Tudor's is a chain that originated in Charleston, but its buttery biscuits are always baked from scratch—try 'em with red-eye gravy (secret ingredient: coffee!) or smeared with local jam.

First Lady Cathy Justice's Cornbread Recipe

The family recipe won a blue ribbon at the State Fair and is served at the Greenbrier Resort's Prime 44 West steakhouse.

HANDS ON 10 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 45 MINUTES

1 cup yellow cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/16 teaspoon salt
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 cup buttermilk
¼ cup canola oil

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Grease an 8x8-inch baking pan.
2. In a medium bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together egg, buttermilk and oil. Add the buttermilk mixture to the cornmeal mixture and stir just until combined. Pour batter into prepared pan.
3. Bake 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes before cutting.

SERVES 9.

Best served warm with a smear of butter and drizzle of honey, this award-winning recipe's salty-sweet flavor makes it a truly delectable dish.

let it snow

Feel the snow crunch beneath your feet or watch the magic unfold by a blazing fireplace. These cool base camps capture the best of winter fun.

WRITER *Shayla Martin*

Your Perfect Getaway

Hit the slopes, your way. Use these icons to find cool-weather destinations that match up perfectly with your vacation preferences.

COZY-SEEKERS

Plenty of chances to eat, drink and cuddle up indoors, with a balance of outdoor activities.

Blackwater Falls State Park

DAVIS

Freezing temperatures turn the 57-foot cascading Blackwater Falls waterfall into a plunging curtain of ice surrounded by snow-covered evergreens (and one excellent photo op). More than 10 miles of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trails await within the park, with rentals available at the Blackwater Falls adventure lodge. From mid-December through February, bring the whole family to the longest sled run on the East Coast. The ¼-mile run has a conveyor belt to transport riders to the top of the hill and a nearby warming hut for beverages and snacks.

GOLDEN EXPLORERS

Gentle walks and low-impact activities perfect for sauntering through winter scenery.

HIGH ADVENTURE

Heart-pounding runs (and more thrills) cater to experienced adventurers.

OUTDOOR FAMILIES

Varied activities so travelers of all ages and abilities can join in on the fun.

WHITE GRASS SKI TOURING CENTER

White Grass Ski Touring Center

DAVIS

Cross-country skiers and snowshoers, rejoice! With access to 2,500 acres of private, state and federal lands (including the serene wilderness of Canaan Valley Resort and Blackwater Falls State Park), visitors to White Grass can enjoy all the perks of a major ski resort: 48 curvy and challenging trails, gear rental, a ski school and warming centers. There's also an on-site cafe serving healthy, comforting dishes—many of which are vegetable-based—to keep you fueled for adventure.

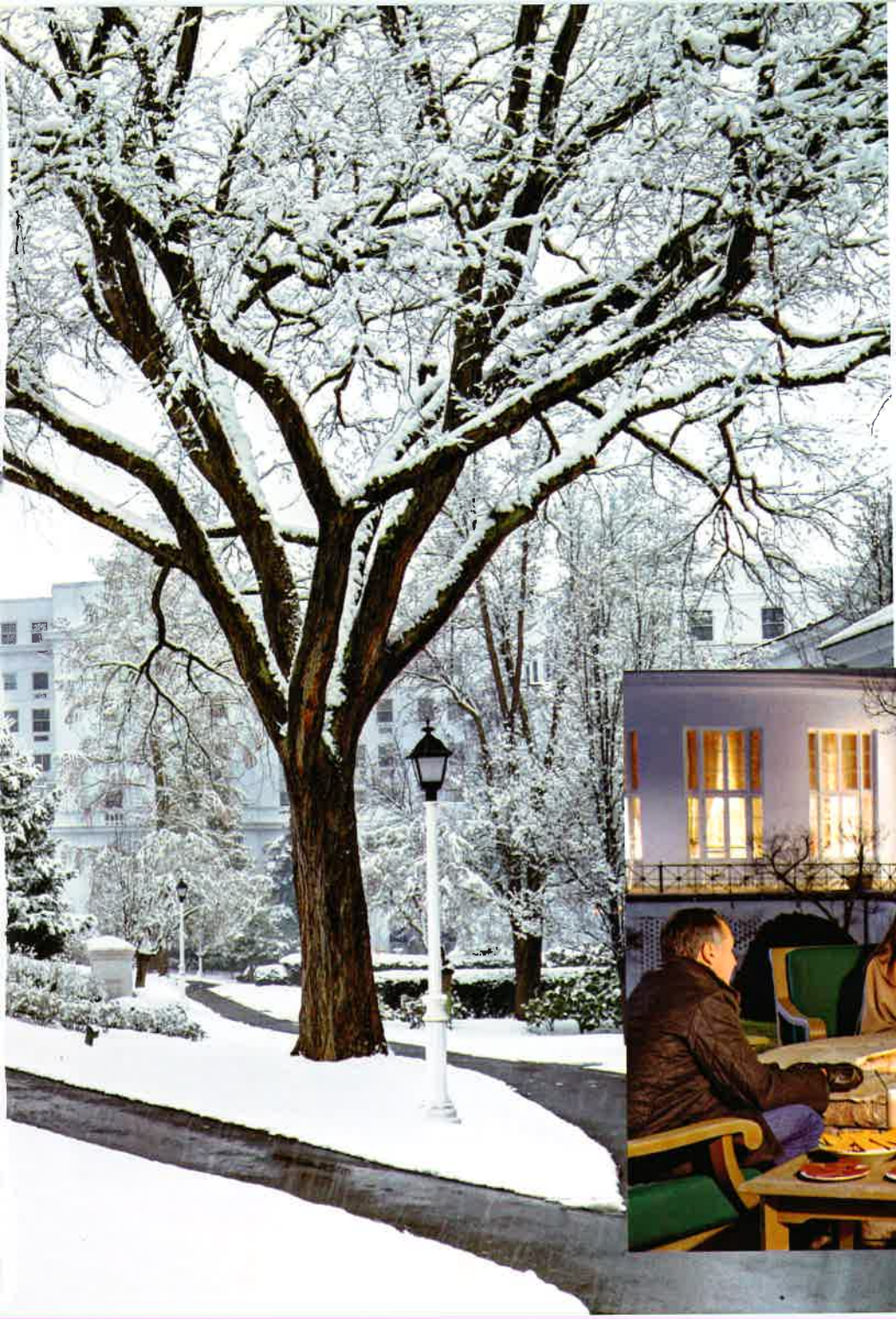
Winterplace Ski Resort

GHENT

Come for the ski lessons, stay for the Saturday night karaoke contest on the Winterplace Stage. New skiers and boarders can learn how to glide with the best. (Added perk: results are guaranteed, so you can take the class for free until you're satisfied.) Intermediate and advanced skiers will find thrills here, too, as will families looking for a beginner-friendly wintry rush. This resort features the largest snow tubing park in the state, plus four on-site restaurants to please everyone in your crew.

WINTERPLACE SKI RESORT

The Greenbrier Resort looks like a regal, real-life snow globe when it's draped in powdery white. Have your camera ready as you dash through the snow in a charming horse-drawn carriage.



The Greenbrier Resort

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

A memorable winter getaway to The Greenbrier Resort looks a little like this: Taking in the property's snowy views via a horse-drawn carriage and joyfully gliding around the ice-skatinag rink, then warming up inside at the Greenbrier Arcade and Bowling Alley. Elegant dining experiences, a private casino and more excitement await visitors on-site. And for those wanting to enjoy downhill skiing during their visit, the resort offers transportation to nearby Winterplace Ski Resort in Ghent.

PIPESTEM RESORT STATE PARK

Pipestem Resort State Park

PIPESTEM

Perched on the east rim of the Bluestone River Gorge, the mountaintop resort offers incredible views from every direction, 26 cabins, two lodges, 82 campsites and three full-service restaurants. Guests are welcome to bring their own skis and sleds to hit the excellent cross-country trails, or rent equipment from Pipestem's Pro Shop. Don't forget to pick up something for your sweet tooth at Tramway Sweets and Treats, an on-site 1950s-style soda shop and ice cream parlor.

Timberline Mountain

DAVIS

This beloved resort dates to 1971, and after a $12 million renovation by new ownership, Timberline Four Seasons Resort reopened as Timberline Mountain for the 2021 ski season. Guests can expect to enjoy high-speed lifts, an updated terrain park, more than 1,500 options for skiing and snowboarding rental equipment, a revamped après-ski bar, and new food services. But despite these much-anticipated updates, the resort's classic trails await—including the 2-mile beginner favorite, Salamander Run.

TIMBERLINE MOUNTAIN

Canaan Valley Resort State Park

DAVIS

With its sweeping views of Canaan Valley and the Allegheny Mountains, families will love skating around the ice rink, cross-country snowshoeing and zooming through the 1,200-foot-long tube park—not to mention the resort's cutting-edge Snowsports School, which offers private and group lessons for all ages. After a day spent on the slopes, restore mind and body with a massage at The Spa at Canaan, then retire to a cozy, multiroom cabin or cottage with furnished kitchens, wood-burning fireplaces and outdoor firepits.

When the Mountain State wears its winter whites, skiers and snowboarders take solace in its peaceful, powdery slopes and remote cabins to feel far from home and close to Almost Heaven.

Oglebay

WHEELING

Oglebay resort offers all the necessities for skiers and snowboarders, such as a terrain park, a triple chair lift to an 815-foot slope with a 168-foot vertical drop and specials for first-timers. (Lessons and clinics include rental equipment and a discount on lift tickets.) Off the slopes, the decades-old Winter Festival of Lights is truly spectacular. One of the country's largest holiday lights displays, the drive-through event features 6 miles of LED-lit attractions, and part of the experience is in 3D. Don't forget to stop by the Good Zoo for a reindeer sighting!

Elk River Touring Center

SLATYFORK

In winter months, this 150-acre former mountain homestead in the heart of the Monongahela National Forest transforms into a nostalgic wonderland. The wood cabin-style resort is a mini version of many area resorts, so explorers can revel in the restorative and peaceful atmosphere. Try a Nordic skiing or snowshoeing experience along its 30 kilometers of cross-country ski trails throughout the backcountry. Cross-country ski lessons are available, as are equipment rentals.

Snowshoe Mountain

SNOWSHOE

With 180 inches of average annual snowfall, 60 trails and 257 acres, Snowshoe Mountain is an adventurous getaway with activities for everyone. Snowshoe Basin has a diverse collection of ski and snowboarding trails, including the experts-only Lower Shay's Revenge (once called the toughest slope in the Mid-Atlantic), the intermediate Little Spruce Trail, and a wide variety of beginners trails and freestyle terrain. After the sun sets, head to the Silver Creek area for nighttime skiing and snow tubing.

Not into skiing and snowboarding? Snowshoe Mountain also offers snowmobile and off-road tours, sleigh rides, and guided horseback riding adventures.

IN APRIL 1971, JOHN DENVER RELEASED WHAT WOULD BECOME HIS SIGNATURE SONG—AND ONE OF WEST VIRGINIA'S OFFICIAL STATE ANTHEMS. AFTER 50 YEARS, "COUNTRY ROADS" CONTINUES TO RESONATE, CONJURING IMAGES OF HOME FOR PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD. LET THE SONG POINT YOU TO WV ATTRACTIONS, AND LEARN ABOUT SOME OF THE ARTISTS WHO HAVE INTERPRETED THE TUNE.

take me home,

country roads turns 50

WRITER *Gary Thompson*

The Blue Ridge Mountains are some of the oldest on Earth, yet nothing feels as fresh as a breeze rolling off of their majestic peaks.

Almost Heaven, West Virginia

We like to think of the entire state as Almost Heaven, a place full of unspoiled nature, rich history and peaceful pursuits. That's why we've made these words the focus of our invitation to experience the state in all its lyrical beauty and wonder.

Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River

Part of the epic Appalachians that rise in the eastern United States from the Deep South to New England, the Blue Ridge Mountains pass through West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. They get their name from the soft blue haze that often hangs over the peaks and ridges, the result of a substance released by the trees.

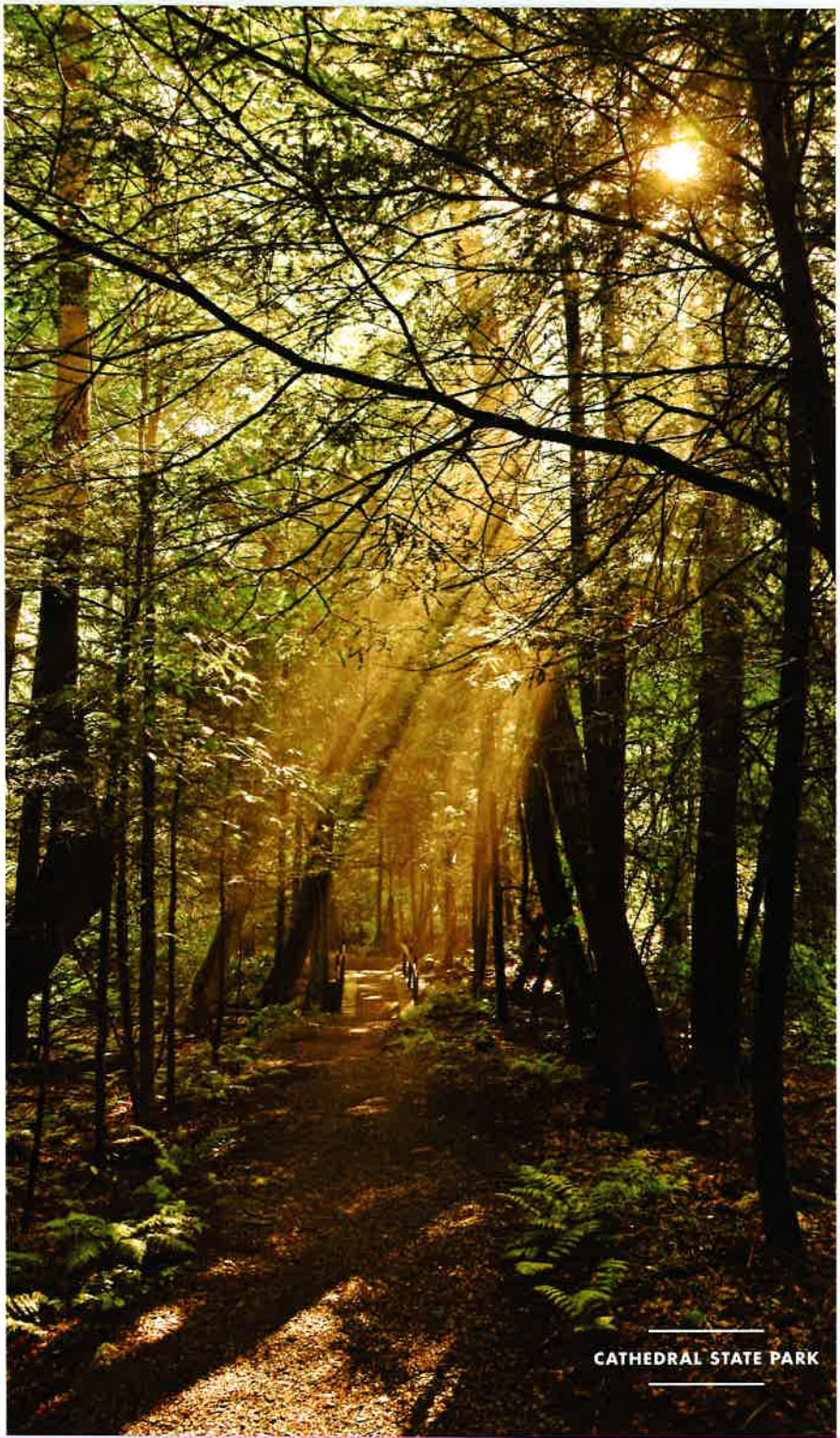
The Shenandoah River flows near the state's eastern border as well, running alongside Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park before emptying into the Potomac River. Harpers Ferry is a prime spot to take in panoramic views of both the mountains and the rivers.

Life is old there, older than the trees

Find some of the oldest and tallest trees in the state at Cathedral State Park in Aurora. These 90-foot eastern hemlocks are older than the state of West Virginia (more than 150 years). Take the Giant Hemlock Trail to walk under some of the largest specimens.

Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze

West Virginia is the only state completely within the Appalachian Mountain region, which includes some of the oldest mountains on Earth—the Blue Ridge are said to be 1 billion years old.



CATHEDRAL STATE PARK

'Take' Covers

John Denver's most recognized song, "Country Roads," lives in cover versions that span genres and generations of performers, including these West Virginia artists.

Country music star **Brad Paisley,** a Glen Dale native, channeled John Denver when he sang "Country Roads" with a choir of 60,000 football fans before a West Virginia University game in 2015.

Charleston native Mira Stanley and Chuck E. Costa, music and life partners in the pop-folk duo **The Sea The Sea,** recorded a hauntingly beautiful version heard in TV ads for West Virginia tourism.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (John Denver) Getty, (Brad Paisley) Jeff Lipsky

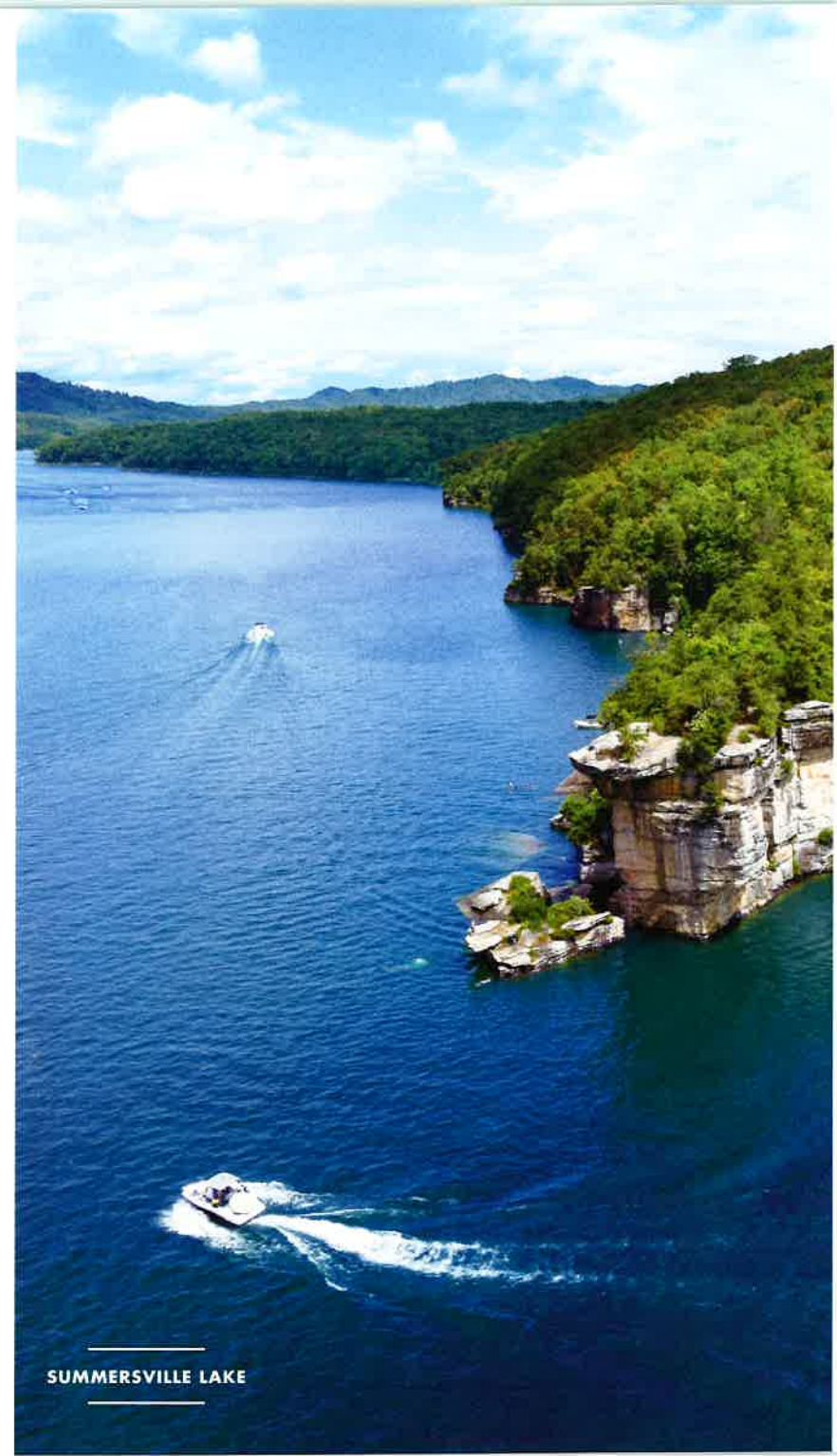
Classically trained rock violinist **Adam DeGraff**, who lives on a farm in Lewisburg, uses the magic of live looping to weave the familiar melody into a toe-tapping tapestry.

The slow and spiritual interpretation by Americana gospel band **The Sycomores** mingles an almost religious reverence for West Virginia with a poignant longing for home.

Landau Eugene Murphy Jr. of Logan County used his Sinatra-like voice to win NBC's *America's Got Talent*. His soulful cover wins hearts too.

TUNE IN

Hover your phone's camera over the code for a playlist of "Country Roads" covers.



SUMMERSVILLE LAKE

All my memories gather 'round her

West Virginia is a storehouse of memories. The 35th state's impressive selection of theaters and museums are a testament to its treasure trove of arts, culture, science and history.

Miner's lady, stranger to blue water

Once you visit West Virginia, you'll no longer be a stranger to mining or blue water. Follow its country roads to discover the legacies that powered the Industrial Revolution. Come feel the rush in its abundant lakes, rivers and streams.

Dark and dusty, painted on the sky

Feast your eyes on the skies. West Virginia has some of the clearest night skies east of the Mississippi, and stargazing locations like Spruce Knob and the Green Bank Observatory grant unparalleled up-close views.

Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye

Well known among West Virginians, many of today's moonshine recipes date back generations. Be rewarded with distinct flavors from distilleries across the state and bring favorites home for a second taste of vacation later.

I hear her voice in the mornin' hour, she calls me

The simplest way to gain a new perspective: Wake up early to watch the sun cast its warm, dramatic glow from the highest mountains to the deepest valleys, and witness the line blur between heaven and earth.

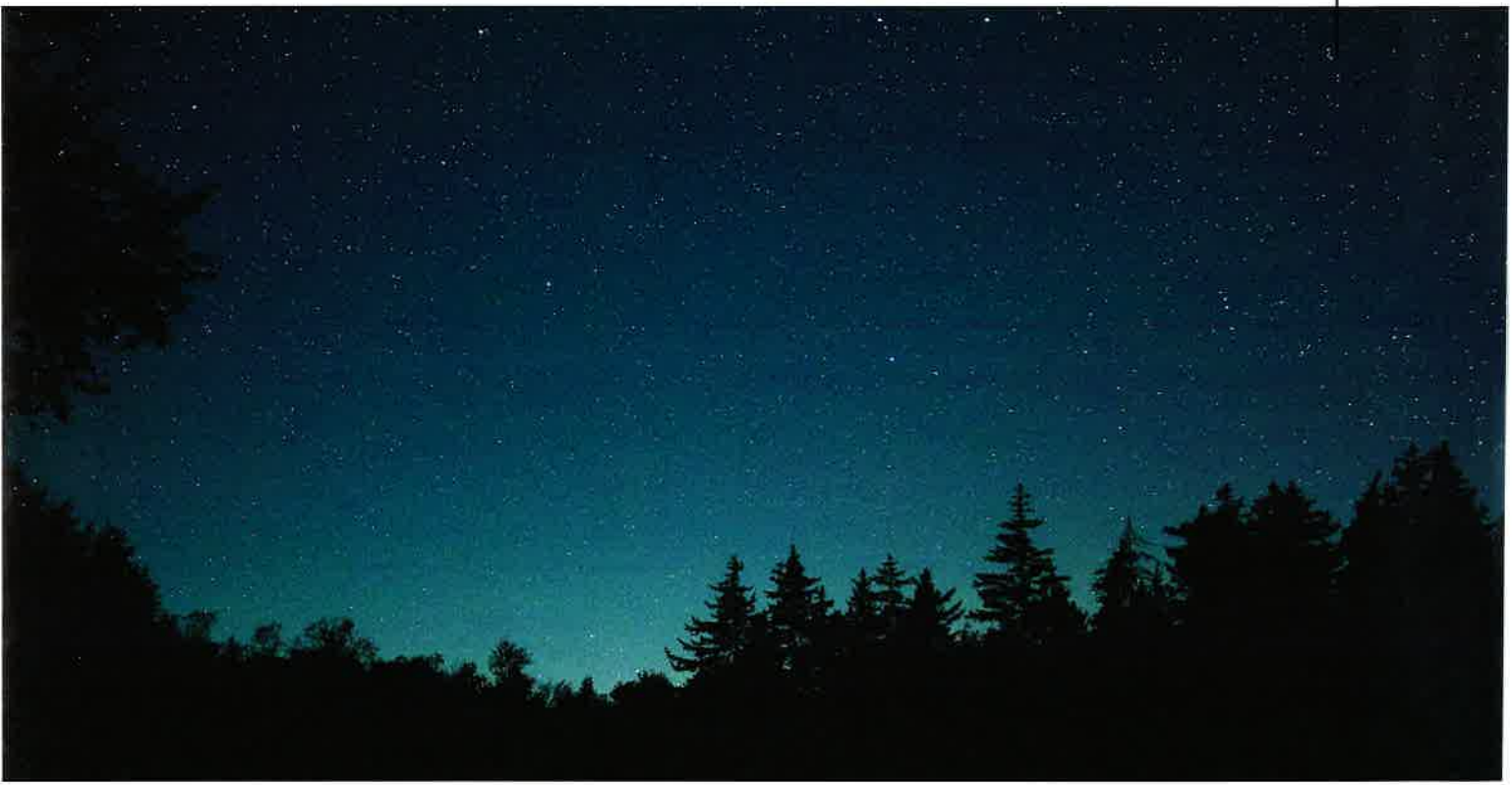
The radio reminds me of my home far away

West Virginia Public Broadcasting's *Mountain Stage* is one of the state's most treasured institutions. The two-hour show is distributed to more than 200 radio stations worldwide each week. Tune in to hear toe-tapping melodies from hot bands on the national music scene.

Drivin' down the road, I get a feelin' that I should've been home yesterday, yesterday

It's never too late to find your sense of home in West Virginia. Come today. Come tomorrow. We'll be waiting to show you our state and all of its enduring beauty.

West Virginia's true nightlife is a sight to behold—if you know where to look. Head to one of its parks on a clear night and prepare to go starry-eyed.

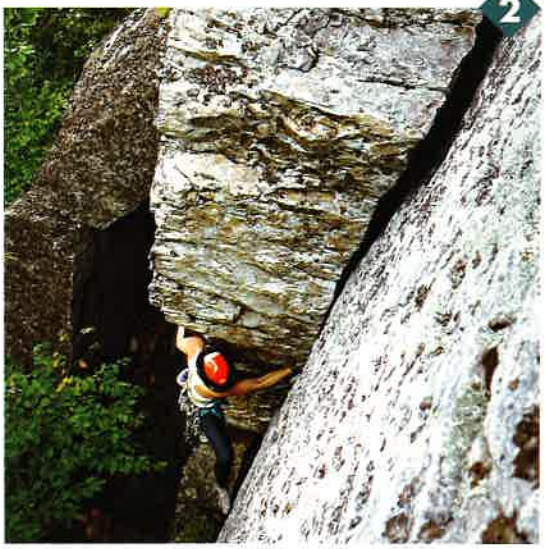


@adventuresofaplusk
"Walking around Harpers Ferry is like walking back in time. The town feels like one giant museum with tons of displays, informational signage and over 100 historical buildings."

@brykdelaney
"Douglas Falls is a great hidden gem that should not be missed if you find yourself in West Virginia."

@pxlsam
Almost Heaven's wildflower-studded valleys and state parks make for Insta-worthy landscape portraits.

#almost



heaven

Share your Mountain State moments on social media with #AlmostHeaven.

1

@anaydarekar
"You have to visit and see it to believe it. West Virginia mountain roads are full of #fallcolors! It's a visual treat to drive through these roads, and a photographer's paradise."

2

@srmgeast
The fin-like peaks of Seneca Rocks, made of Tuscarora quartzite, can be seen across the region.

3

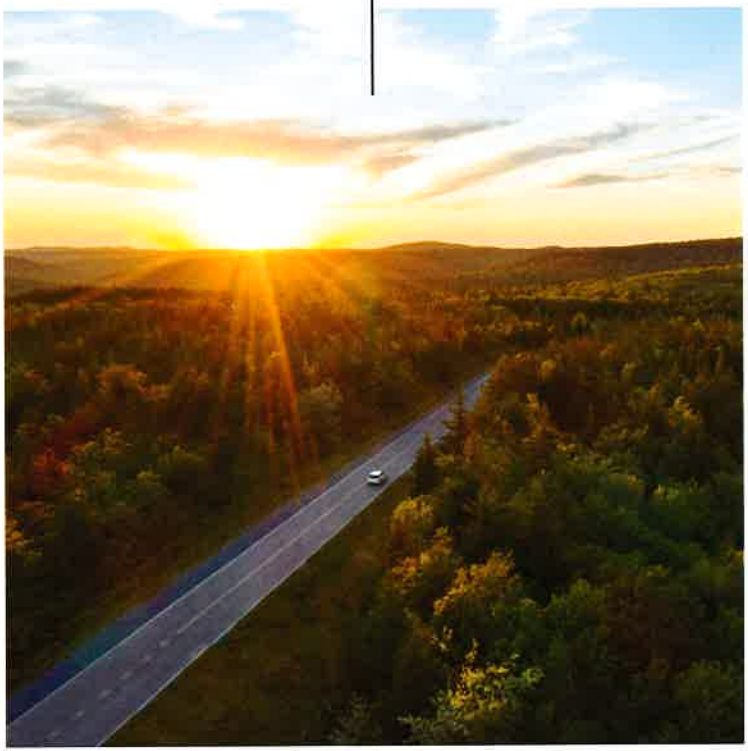
@staysandgetaways
"There are few things as glorious as breakfast time at Sundogs B&B located in Shepherdstown, WV."

4

@baileyjo_thegoldengirl
"Here's to hoping that everyone had a terrific #tongueouttuesday."

@iamanar92
West Virginia may be landlocked, but you can spend the weekend relaxing on the beach and soaking up the sun from the deep, crystal-clear waters of Summersville Lake.

The Last Word



Anytime you're in West Virginia or near it and you sing 'Take Me Home, Country Roads,' it's a sight to behold.

BRAD PAISLEY

WEST
VIRGINIA
WVtourism.com
#AlmostHeaven